



Motorists urged to use other routes during works

AVOID THE M5 FOR 18 MONTHS

Report by Richard Guttridge

DRIVERS have been urged not to use the M5 during a major 18-month roadworks scheme.

Motorists are facing a traffic nightmare from Easter when the speed limit between junctions one for West Bromwich and two for Oldbury is slashed to 30mph.

Those who regularly use the motorway are facing problems until the end of 2018.

Highways England has insisted the work to replace waterproofing on the crumbling Oldbury viaduct is essential and cannot be put off.

Bosses also stressed the job could not be done overnight and that the 30mph speed limit is necessary if slip roads were to be kept open.

It is likely to leave thousands of vehicles crawling along the two-mile stretch

Council bosses in Sandwell have raised concerns about the impact the roadworks scheme will have on businesses and on surrounding roads.

Matthew Taylor, Highways England asset manager for Birmingham, said motorists should avoid the motorway.

He said: "This is going to have a major impact and we wouldn't be doing the scheme unless we absolutely had to.

"The waterproofing has come to the end of its life and has been down for 30 years.

Alternative

"We are asking people who usually use the M5 to look at using alternative routes or public transport."

Traffic will continue to run in both directions for the duration of the works, but will be reduced to two narrow lanes each way.

The 30mph speed limit has led to concerns of traffic moving at a snail's pace.

Mr Taylor defended the move, saying: "We have had to implement a 30mph speed limit, which is unusual on a motorway. We need traffic to merge onto a contraflow in a short space of time. With 50mph there wouldn't have been as much time to do this manoeuvre.

"We were adamant we would be keeping the slip roads open, so people will still be able to get on and off at junctions one and two. We need to keep the slip roads open."

Mr Taylor continued: "We do a lot of work overnight but it is just not feasible. It is a comprehensive repair to both the northbound and southbound carriageway."

Preparatory work began in January and the main work is due to start after Easter next month. Sandwell Council leader Steve Eling suggested the M6 Toll road be made free in a bid to cut disruption by easing pressure on the motorway network.

VISITOR ATTRACTIONS SPRING INTO ACTION



Ready for Easter outings – Alison Hyatt and Jane Hanney all set for the start of the new season at Haden Hill House in Cradley Heath

SANDWELL museums open their doors to visitors again from Saturday with a major programme of events, exhibitions, family activities and school holiday fun scheduled.

After a winter of deep cleaning, decorating, working on displays, organising and planning, Sandwell museums staff are all set for the new season. Regular group meetings and pre-booked visits have continued at museums during the winter months but April is the month things really get going again.

As well as the varied programme, there are regular activities and groups for all ages to get involved with. Entrance is free but there may be a small charge for some of the activities on offer.

Exhibition

Following the winter work, one of the rooms at Oak House, West Bromwich, is now a parlour again, as inventories show it was in the 1680s complete with a bed for guests.

There's a new exhibition of clothes from the 1950s, '60s and '70s at Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery, along with some old photos of Sandwell high streets down the years.

Meanwhile, at popular Haden Hill House in Cradley Heath, the library has had a makeover.

For more details go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/joininmuseums, follow @sandwellmuseums on Twitter or like the 'Sandwell Museums' Facebook page.

PLANNING

200-year-old pub to be demolished

A 19th Century pub in Lye is to be demolished and a public footpath diverted, under plans approved by Dudley Council.

An application to tear down Ye Olde Saltbrook on Hayes Lane to make way for offices, a workshop and storage, was given unanimous approval by Dudley Council's development control committee on Monday night.

The vacant inn, which dates back nearly 200 years, is by the banks of the River Stour and will now become the latest Black Country pub to be knocked down.

BUSINESS

Signs are good for manufacturer

A SIGNS manufacturer has moved to larger premises in Dudley and bought new machinery.

DGS Supplies, which manufactures and distributes road and health and safety signs for construction companies, has won its first national contract, with DIY chain Homebase.

The firm has moved to new premises on Dudley's Thornleigh Trading Estate, double the size of its previous unit on Vauxhall Street, and two new staff have joined the now 10-strong workforce.

EDUCATION

Principal and staff's national recognition

THE principal and staff at Ormiston Forge Academy in Cradley Heath have been selected for a top role supporting schools that find themselves in challenging circumstances.

Andrew Burns is one of more than 70 principals to be appointed to the role of national leader of education (NLE). NLEs along with staff in their school use their success and professionalism to provide additional leadership for struggling schools.

Mr Burns said: "It's an incredible honour to receive this designation on behalf of the academy."

INSIDE

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We need you to help with the hole truth



DRIVERS are increasingly facing a new menace on our roads that is causing tens of thousands of pounds damage to cars and poses a danger to road users – potholes.

Roads across the region are crumbling with a backlog in road maintenance, more traffic on the roads and the weather blamed for the pothole epidemic we are now facing.

Despite Government funding to help councils tackle the problem, potholes are popping up everywhere with experts estimating it will take nine years to clear the backlog of maintenance needed on our roads.

Drowning in a deluge of complaints about potholes, councils say they have to prioritise main roads and those where the damage poses the greatest risk to the public. As the councils target the roads they believe should benefit from the Government

funding, we want you to help us highlight the worst potholes you know.

Which road feels more like an off-road track as you bounce along? Where are the deep potholes that risk puncturing tyres or damaging your car's suspension? Are there any roads you avoid now because they are so badly damaged?

The Chronicle wants to identify the top 10 pothole black spots across Staffordshire and the Black Country to flag up to our councils. We want our readers, the people who have to drive on these pothole-ridden routes every day, to have their say on which

roads need to be prioritised. To help us highlight the 'top ten' of the worst potholes, can you drop us a line telling us exactly where the pothole is and if possible attach a picture. Don't worry if it is just a snapshot, we just need an idea of the damage to the road.

Please email details of the road which is damaged, a picture if possible, your name and any comments you would like to make to Sue.Attwater@expressandstar.co.uk

Alternatively, drop us a line at Editorial, The Chronicles, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

Driving us potty! As councils count costs

COUNCILS across the region are spending hundreds of thousands of pounds in compensation to drivers because of the shocking state of the roads, figures have revealed.

Staffordshire County Council has had to pay out more than £270,000 in compensation to drivers in the last four years.

Between 2012/13 and 2015/16 a total of 3,715 claims were made against the authority – with some still not resolved after four years. During the period the authority, responsible for highways maintenance, paid out £273,265 to motorists who had suffered accidents due to the poorly treated roads.

Walsall Council paid out £4,282 in compensation over 43 claims in 2015/16 and £9,366 for 71 claims the year before that. While in 2013/14 there was £15,022 paid for 143 claims and £29,642 the year before for 201 claims.

In Sandwell, there were 23 successful claims made by drivers in 2014/15, compared to 36 in 2013/14, 88 in 2012/13 and 72 in 2011/12. The amount paid out by the council in those years was £48,217 in 2014/15, £98,462 the year before, £351,669 and £563,921 in 2011/12.

Disgrace

Meanwhile Dudley Council has revealed that it paid out more than £22,000 in compensation over damage caused by potholes during a two-year period. Some 270 claims were lodged by drivers against the council between 2014 and 2016 over damage caused by crumbling roads.

Staffordshire County Councillor Gordon Alcott said: "To me it is a disgrace that the council has had to spend this much public money on paying out for damaged caused by potholes.

"They know there is a huge problem but they don't seem to be bothered about fixing it or improving the situation.

"Some of the roads in Staffordshire are abysmal. I know already that cyclists, HGV drivers and motorcyclists are having to swerve out of the way of some potholes and I just worry that it is a matter of time until someone is seriously injured."

Recently the Chronicle revealed that 38 reports about potholes on just one roundabout were made to the county council, the Five Ways island in Heath Hayes.



The island at Five Ways, Heath Hayes near Cannock, for which there were complaints about 38 potholes

Long road ahead to deal with backlog

SOME £1.25 billion is needed to get roads in the West Midlands back into reasonable condition with one in six needing to be repaired or even facing closure within the next five years, a damning report has revealed.

An ageing network, decades of underfunding, increased traffic and wetter winters has led to around 17 per cent of all local roads reported as being in poor structural condition, with less than five years of life remaining, according to the Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey.

The number of potholes filled on the crumbling road network over

the last year has dropped again for the second successive year, but is still high at 1.7 million – which works out as one every 19 seconds.

The ALARM survey, produced by the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA), is now in its 22nd year and is seen by many as the most authoritative and comprehensive study into local road maintenance funding and condition.

It reports that nationwide local authorities need over £12 billion to bring the network up to scratch – a figure that has remained largely unchanged for four years – and the gap between the amount they received this year and the amount

they say they need to keep the carriageway in reasonable order is almost £730 million.

And it will take nine years to clear the backlog of carriage maintenance in the region, according to the report. It costs an average of £69 per pothole.

Alan Mackenzie, chairman of the AIA, said: "Potholes are a symptom of poorly maintained roads but spending money fixing them in isolation, although essential, is wasteful. The most efficient way to deal with our crumbling roads is to fix them properly and stop potholes forming in the first place. "It is time we had a rethink."

Poundland is shedding last of the 99p Stores chain

POUNDLAND has put the 99p Stores business into administration after closing around 60 stores.

The Black Country-based £1-for-everything business bought the rival budget chain in a £55 million deal 18 months ago.

Most of the 250 99p Stores have been converted to Poundlands but 60 stores were left. They were all closed down in the first three months of this year and nearly all the staff transferred to nearby Poundland branches.

The separate 99p Stores company has now been placed in administration with Alix Partners, who will handle the company and its liabilities.

The 99p Stores takeover was delayed for months by a competition watchdog investigation that finally found no cause for concern.

But that resulted in substantial additional costs for Poundland when it came to absorbing the business and converting its shops.

The cost of the takeover punched a big hole in Poundland's 2016 profits and left Poundland vulnerable to a takeover bid by South African retail group Steinhoff, which paid £610 million for it last year.

A spokesman for the Willenhall-based business said 'almost everyone' working at 99p Stores had been found a job.

Founded in the Black Country in 1990, Poundland now has more than 700 UK stores with others in Spain and Ireland. As well as its headquarters in Willenhall it operates a major dept at Bilston, together employing around 700 people.

Date for Wolves memorial service

WOLVES fans will pay tribute at a memorial service next week to loved ones and club legends who have died.

Club bosses have announced that its annual memorial service will be at St Peter's Collegiate Church in Wolverhampton on Tuesday from 6pm.

Among the famous names associated with Wolves to have died over the last year include former vice-president and women's cricket star Baroness Rachael Heyhoe Flint, former managers Graham Taylor and Graham Hawkins, and Sammy Smyth, who scored in the 1949 FA Cup Final victory.

The service is expected to last 45 minutes. Those wishing to attend should email fans@wolves.co.uk with names of loved ones. The deadline is 5pm tomorrow (Friday).

Speed cameras are back on busy route

SPEED cameras have been installed on the Birmingham New Road ahead of being switched on this week. It will be the first time permanent cameras have been working on the busy dual carriageway for four years and drivers are being warned to stick to the speed limit.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Choir celebrates pianist's 90th

CRADLEY Heath Male Voice Choir broke off from rehearsals to celebrate the 90th birthday of their dedicated accompanist.

A fish and chip supper was held to celebrate Cynthia Partridge's 90th, as well as to mark the musical director Philippa Brett's 40th birthday.

Cynthia has been the accompanist for the choir for the last 19 years.

She also trains the choir's barber-shop singers and all of the soloists.

The choir's next concert, in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice, is at St James' Church Wollaston, on April 8.

Lady going Gaga for Brum concerts

OUTRAGEOUS American pop star Lady Gaga has added an extra concert at Birmingham's Genting Arena as part of her Joanne World Tour.

The New Yorker, who had major hits with Poker Face and LGBT anthem Born This Way, had already announced a gig at Birmingham's city centre Barclaycard Arena for October 15 but has now added the date at the NEC venue on October 12.

Tickets for the Barclaycard Arena date are already available and tickets for the Genting Arena concert go on sale at 9am tomorrow (Friday).

Meeting update on Hippodrome plan

A PUBLIC meeting updating the public on progress with the refurbishment of the iconic Dudley Hippodrome theatre will be held on Sunday.

People are invited to hear the latest on the multi-million project to bring the historic building back into use.

The meeting will be held at the Station Hotel on Castle Hill from 6.30pm.

Campaigners from the Black Country Hippodrome group say it is likely to be at least three years before the venue opens to the public.

Free wedding is prize for a happy couple

A COUPLE from Halesowen have won a free wedding.

Billie Pell and her husband-to-be David Crampton will tie the knot in August at Priory Hall in Dudley.

The couple have been together for 10 years and have a three-year-old daughter.

They entered a free prize draw at an open day held at the Dudley town centre venue on Saturday. The park features the old Priory ruins and is overlooked by Dudley Castle.

Charity coffee morning

HURST Green Methodist Church in Narrow Drive, Halesowen, is holding a coffee morning and charity book sale from 10.30am on Saturday. Books will cost 10p and donations will be requested for refreshments. A friendly social lunch club is held at the church every week.

Man arrested after armed police raid block of flats

ARMED police descended on a block of flats in Tividale as part of a seven-hour stand-off with a suspected burglar.

Negotiators tried to talk to the man, believed to be armed with a knife, while armed officers and riot police swooped on the flats in Tower Road.

The street was closed as a precaution while police negotiators tried to persuade the man to come out of the second floor flat.

A 28-year-old man was eventually arrested on suspicion of a number of counts of burglary in connection with pre-existing warrants.

The first officers on scene went to the address to arrest a man at around 10am on Saturday and then called for armed assistance as he was believed to have a knife. Five police cars and an ambulance were despatched. Two fire engines were also in attendance. Officers with guns arrived at the flat shortly after 2pm.

West Midlands Police confirmed via Twitter that it was not a terrorism related incident.

Shocked residents watched as around six police officers with riot shields and batons entered alongside armed officers.

A police spokesperson confirmed on Saturday night that the incident had been resolved and a man had been arrested. A statement said: "A man is now in police custody following a seven-hour stand-off with police. Nobody was hurt in the incident and we would like to thank the community for their patience."

Mental health work praised

MENTAL health services in Dudley and Walsall have been praised for making 'significant improvements' and is now rated as 'good'.

The inspection was carried out by the Care Quality Commission, which judged care through Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, providing services to around 560,000 patients.

The trust was previously inspected in February 2016 when it was rated as 'requires improvement' overall but inspectors found considerable improvements had since been made.

However, health trust bosses were still told to look at making services effective, those which were judged as 'requiring improvement'.

Table-top sale is held at church hall

A TABLE-TOP sale is being held at St Paul's Church Hall, Vicarage Road, on Saturday. Doors will open at 10am until 12pm and there will be 20 tables of bargains. Admission is 20p. Proceeds in aid of church funds.

£850k bingo hall is given the go-ahead



Mecca Bingo want to convert this store

A BINGO hall is set to open at the site of a former supermarket in Dudley town centre, creating 25 jobs.

Planning permission has been granted to enable Mecca Bingo to open its latest venue inside the old Select and Save shop on the High Street.

The firm said it was keen to take over the empty unit and that it would invest £850,000 in the project.

The proposal was recommended for approval by the council's planning officers and given the green light at Monday's meeting of the development control committee.

"The unit has been vacant for over four years, and this clearly suggests that the site is not attractive for retail users," said agent Paul Derry, speaking at the meeting on behalf of applicants Mecca Bingo Ltd.

"The change of use will result in a significant £850,000 investment into a building described as a negative contribution building in a conservation area character appraisal."

The bingo hall would be created under the brand name Luda, part of a chain of smaller clubs being created by Mecca Bingo's owners. The new

brand aims to appeal to a new generation of younger players.

The bingo firm is keen to create another centre in the Black Country to add to existing sites in Bilston and Brierley Hill. Bosses were left frustrated after a bid to launch in Walsall was refused in November.

But Councillor Bryan Cotterill said: "We've got poorer people who may see it as a means of getting a little bit more wealthy. They will spend what few pounds they've got on gambling."

The plans were approved by a majority of committee members.

New homes plan to rid town of eyesores

MORE than 350 homes will be built across Dudley over the next decade bringing eyesore land and empty shops back to life.

Several sites have been put forward including land next to the Black Country Living Museum, opposite Dudley Magistrates Court and in the town centre.

The council has committed to building 360 homes as part of the Dudley Area Action Plan.

A total of 35 homes are set to be built on Tipton Road, 25 on the Gipsies Tent Inn which has stood empty on Steppingstone Street near the court for more than 35 years and 60 on Upper High Street.

Plans to build 80 homes on car park land on King Street and Flood Street have also been mentioned in the report, along with homes on Abberley Street, Tower Street, Cavendish House and Birdcage Walk and Appleyard Site in Wolverhampton Street.

It is hoped that the homes will be built by 2026. Councillors have welcomed the proposals.

Councillor Cathryn Bayton said homes are needed and the town centre homes will 'hope-fully lead to a more thriving town'.

She said: "I always welcome any housing developments as long as they meet the criteria of being affordable - whether that's through social housing or Government affordable housing schemes."

Regeneration

"Bringing homes to the town will hopefully lead to a more thriving town and types of businesses may change and lean more towards a market town. I welcome anything that results in the regeneration of Dudley."

Councillor Steve Waltho said: "The new homes are good news. There are far too many tatty old shops and if we can regenerate the centre by converting shops into homes and bringing more people into the town to live then it will hopefully give the economy a lift."

There are a number of other ambitious proposals for Dudley, including revamping the bus station and extending the Midland Metro.

A document published by the council, said 'there is a need to achieve a mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures'.

It was revealed earlier this month the council is also planning to spruce up shop frontages on Birdcage Walk. The vision for Birdcage Walk and other streets near the bus station include demolishing the former Co-op.

Pensioner loves pumping iron



Weightlifting Coseley pensioner Edward Bastable says age doesn't have to be a barrier to keeping fit

WHEN it comes to fitness, age knows no bounds as 71-year-old Edward Bastable is a regular pumping iron at this local gym.

Mr Bastable, from Coseley, tried out the gym at the Sandwell leisure trust facility at Tipton Leisure Centre when he was 69 out of 'boredom' but has not looked back since.

He now trains there five to six times a week and has lost more than three and a half stone.

"I only went along to the gym

out of boredom and to see what it was like but it's become a bit of an obsession I guess," he said.

"I'd ballooned up to 17-and-a-half stone since finishing work. SLT showed me the ropes and devised some specific programmes and ongoing targets."

"I've surprised myself at how well it's all gone and I do well in the regular gym challenges - I'm regularly in the top five for the press up challenge up against all

the youngsters, so there's life in the old boy yet. I absolutely love it and it's been the making of me since I retired."

He added: "I've really built my stamina up, so lots of repetitions are not a problem and that's how you properly build up muscle mass. I warm up for an hour on the exercise bike, cross trainer and rowing machine too and lots of the youngsters joke that's all they can manage."

BEAUTASIA

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Deportation for pair found outside illicit tobacco factory

TWO men had more than £15,000 cash on them when stopped by police outside an illegal tobacco factory in Halesowen.

Officers searched the warehouse premises in Malt Mill Lane and found 3,000 kilos of tobacco being prepared for the evasion of more than £600,000 worth of duty, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

Duty free raw tobacco was being processed into rolling tobacco, on which duty is charged, explained Mr Nigel Stelling, prosecuting. The two men who were detained – Quing Lin, aged 27, and Shaosa Lin, 24 – had just delivered a consignment.

Mayor joins Legends at charity match

THE Mayor of Dudley will be attending the charity football match between Stourbridge Legends and West Bromwich Albion Legends, on Sunday in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice.

Since its debut in 2016, the charity match between the Glassboys and Albion legends has raised more than £15,000 for the hospice. Mayor Councillor Mohammed Hanif has confirmed that he will be welcoming spectators as the gates open at 1pm. The match sees the teams compete for the Jane Webb Memorial Trophy, in tribute to Stourbridge woman Jane Webb, who died in 2015. She was a supporter of the charity and the event was set-up to benefit the Hagley Road Hospice by her son Matt. Tickets cost £5 for the match at the War Memorial Athletic Ground, Amblecote, with under-16s getting in for free.

Albion Legends so far confirmed include Darren Moore and Paul Pechisolido. For latest details see www.marystevenshospice.co.uk website.

The pair were carrying £15,350 from the deal in a rucksack together with keys to the 'factory'. They claimed not to know where the money was to be taken.

Tobacco on which about £180,000 of duty should have been paid was already converted when police arrived while the rest was still to be processed.

Both men were in the country illegally after over staying the time limit on their visa.

Debts

Quing Lin had been forced to join the racket to pay off debts run up through his gambling addiction. He was paid £250 for every three days of employment during which he stayed overnight at the premises. Shaosa Lin, of Viceroy Close, Edgbaston, earned up to £80-a-day after at the factory during the five month processing operation which ended with the arrests on October 16, 2015. He also allowed his bank account to be used to pay rent on the building while recruiting workers.

Both men admitted conspiracy to cheat the public revenue and possession of money obtained through the racket. They were jailed for two years eight months by Judge James Burbidge QC and will face deportation to China after completing the sentence.

Zoo coins it with new souvenirs



The new commemorative coin showcases the new Dudley Zoo logo, as well as the 80th anniversary logo

A SPECIAL coin to commemorate a milestone year for Dudley Zoo has gone on sale.

The coin, which has no monetary value, has been released to coincide with the attraction's 80th anniversary and is on sale in the Safari Shop at the Castle Hill attraction.

The coin features the new zoo and anniversary logos. Visitors have been

quick to snap up the £3.99 souvenir.

Retail manager Isobel Blackwell said: "This is a new product for DZG, but they're proving very popular."

"We wanted something to showcase the zoo's new logo and celebratory anniversary logo and the coin has enabled us to do that."

"They are limited edition though, so once they've gone, they've gone."

The zoo celebrates its milestone on May 6.

More than £290,000 worth of improvements at the zoo are currently under way, which will see various enclosures revamped, including that housing the capuchin monkeys.

Other anniversary merchandise is on sale to mark the milestone, from pens and mugs to badges and keyrings.

Strike has been averted

STRIKE action at Dudley Council has been averted after staff agreed to changes to their contracts.

The revised terms and conditions will save the council more than £1.6m over the next three years, say bosses at the cash-strapped authority.

Staff originally rejected proposals in an initial ballot to 'test the water' over the appetite for industrial action.

The new agreement means that staff will be paid 10p less per mile for mileage allowances, meaning they will get 45p – the HMRC recommended amount – compared to the 55p per mile previously. Staff will also have to take three days unpaid leave and member allowances will be reduced.

Overtime payments for anyone earning over £36,000 will also be stopped, in a bid to save £77,000.

Unite union spokesman Shaun Noble, said: "Unison and GMB members voted to accept the proposed package put forward by Dudley Council (that) Unite members voted to reject. Unite recognises that this constitutes a majority decision to accept by the locally recognised unions and therefore can be implemented."

UKIP councillor Paul Brothwood said: "I welcome the fact the unions have backed down as we would've been in a scenario where we couldn't balance the budget and would've had to make more severe cuts. The staff have made the right decision, as painful as it is."

Man charged with attempted murder

A 44-year-old man has appeared before Dudley magistrates charged with the attempted murder of a 73-year-old security guard.

Lee Parsons, of no fixed abode, is alleged to have attacked the man at Brierley Hill factory Stoke Forgings, Vine Street, at about 1pm on March 19. Parsons also faces an allegation of burglary. He was remanded in custody until April 19, when he will appear at Crown Court.

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College in European students exchange

HALESOWEN College has received more than £70,000 of funding to run a student exchange programme with three schools in Europe.

The two-year project called Strive, is being launched at Halesowen College, thanks to the European cash.

Sports students will be going to Barcelona for four-week placements with employers. Other students from business and IT will go to Munich and Trento in Italy in March.

Two sports students are shadowing a teacher who is leading a course that includes trekking, horseback riding, swimming and survival skills. Another is working in a gym and getting experience as a personal trainer.

The college will in turn host students coming from Spain, Germany and Italy later in the year.

Project manager Jamie Morgan-Green, from Halesowen College, said: "This is a real opportunity for students to have a taste of living and working in a different country. It will enhance their CVs, improve their skills and help them to stand out to potential employers."

It's the latest funding boost for the college which has also received £9,000 from the Big Lottery Fund to enhance its Trim Trail to highlight mental health.

Businessman died when his Mercedes hit bridge

A DRIVER died after he crashed into a bridge at high speed while almost three times the drink-drive limit, an inquest heard.

Jagdeep Singh Bhader, from Hawthorn Croft, Oldbury, died when his Mercedes crashed and burst into flames on the A456 Quinton Expressway on November 7.

Black Country Coroners Bhader, who was an entrepreneur and a company director, had been out socialising with friends. He had been travelling on the Birmingham bound carriageway at 2.40am when his car hit a concrete support pillar of the bridge.

Pc Stuart Thorpe, from the collision investigation unit, said: "There were no marks on the road that would allow us to provide an accurate speed, but looking at the damage caused to the vehicle it would have been a high speed impact at motorway speeds.

Witness

"A witness said that they could see flames coming from the vehicle after the crash and they went towards it in a bid to help. It began to explode and sadly nothing further could be done."

A post mortem test found 210mg of alcohol in Mr Bhader's blood. The legal limit is 80mg.

The hearing was told that

Court heard how that Mr By Clare Butler

Mr Bhader had dropped a friend off in Halesowen around ten minutes before the fatal accident.

The inquest heard that Mr Bhader had died due to severe burns.

Pc Thorpe said: "I think it was a combination of excessive speed and intoxication through alcohol and the effect it had on his reactions that sadly led to this."

Senior Coroner Zafar Siddique gave a conclusion of death due to a road traffic collision.

He said: "This is a tragic set of circumstances and driver error."

Brother-in-law, Sukhdave Singh Dahal read out a statement on behalf of Mr Bhader's wife Inderjit.

The statement read: "This is an enormous loss."

"My hope is that his greatness can continue to shine through his family and children."

Tennis club promises an ace open day



Halesowen Tennis Club members get ready for their annual open day at the Manor Way club

HALESOWEN Tennis Club is holding an open day this Sunday. All are welcome, from beginners to experienced players.

Visitors will be able to play tennis with other players or against a ball machine, as well as talk to members and coaches about the club. Racquets and tennis balls will be provided and there will be special mini-tennis events for children.

The open day at the club off Manor Way, in Halesowen, is taking place this Sunday from noon to 4pm.

Nigel Sadler, chairman of the club, said: "Our open days are always very popular. It is a great chance to come and see our thriving club and try out playing tennis here."

Geoff Barrie, head coach, added: "Open Day visitors get a reduced rate for membership and many end up playing and being coached here on a regular basis."

Halesowen Tennis Club already has more than 200 members, aged from three to 83. For more information call Mike Lambert 07766663466.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Villa legend to be guest at carnival

THIS year's Halesowen Carnival and Music Festival is to be bigger than ever with the addition of a food and drink area.

The drink area will consist of Halesowen micro brewery The Fixed Wheel, Lye-based brewery Sadler's - also sponsors this year's king and queen - and Scottish craft cider producers Waulkmill Cider.

The event on July 1 will be having a couple of guests along with former Villa legend Tony Daley and actor and presenter Des Coleman.

Nominations for the king, queen, prince and princess are still being taken.

Email the events committee at halesowencarnival@gmail.com for an application form.

More parents are fined for absences

THE number of fines handed to parents for failing to get their child to attend school - including taking term time holidays - has more than doubled in Dudley.

In Dudley the number of fines increased from 370 to 844 with 172 prosecuted, and in Sandwell from 113 to 216 with four prosecuted.

Dudley Council's strategic director for people Tony Oakman said: "It is the continued policy of Dudley borough schools that leave of absence for pupils during term time will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances."

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews



Abiding image of bravery and kindness

POLITICIANS and police officers sometimes get a rough ride in the media, and rightly so. Indeed for a columnist, making fun of MPs and over-zealous authority figures is meat and drink.

This is a sign of living in a healthy democracy, and for the most part I believe they are self-aware enough to know it goes with the territory. If you put yourself into a position of authority, you can expect to feel the brickbats.

However, this week things seem different. The sight of the previously little-known Foreign Office minister Tobias Ellwood unsuccessfully trying to save the life of a police officer stabbed in the line of duty puts everything in a different context. And, along with all the un-named doctors, nurses, paramedics and other good citizens who ran towards the danger while others were running away, it is a poignant symbol of how terror attacks, such as the one in London last week, are always doomed to fail.

While Islamic State posts sick internet posts "claiming responsibility" for the actions of its "soldier", the abiding image around the world is one of bravery and kindness, real heroes helping others with no thought for their own safety.

Adrian Elms, Khalid Masood, whatever he calls himself, could not have scored a bigger own-goal for his cause if he tried.

□ □ □

HAVE you ever made a donation through the website Justgiving.com? If so, you probably, like me, did so believing that all the money you donated went to charity.

In fact, one thing to emerge from the fund set up in memory of PC Keith Palmer is that the company which owns the Justgiving website rakes off five per cent commission. And if you tick the Gift Aid box, where the Government refunds the equivalent amount of income tax that the donor would have paid, Justgiving takes five per cent of that, too.

To put this into context, five per cent is the same commission rate that Betfair charges on its betting exchange. Except that the online bookmaker makes no pretence of being anything other than a commercial business out to maximise profits.

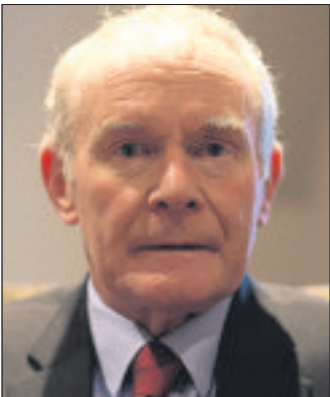
Now, of course, nobody should be expected to work for nothing, and running a website inevitably incurs some administration costs. But five per cent? Last year Justgiving made a profit of £2 million, and spent £10 million on staff costs. Its directors, technicians, sales and administration staff earn, on average, more than £60,000 a year, while the head of the firm received a pay package of £198,000. All coming out of donations from the public.

I think I will be just giving directly to charities in future.

Shock over report on extraction of baby teeth



Mary Berry – toffee pudding unleashed on an unsuspecting nation . . . yum!



Martin McGuinness – Government said it never negotiated with terrorists



Dame Vera Lynn – singer's centenary will doubtless be excuse for yet more concerts

It's adults who are to blame not sugar

"SO sugar's to blame," an enthusiastic radio reporter declared during a report on the shocking news that extractions of baby teeth have risen by 24 per cent. No, sugar's not to blame. Adults are to blame.

THESE days, there is scarcely a telly programme that doesn't come with some sort of warning that it may contain sexual incidents, extreme violence, distressing scenes or flashing lights which could cause epileptic attacks. And yet Mary Berry's sticky toffee pudding was unleashed on an unsuspecting nation this week, without a word of warning. More, more, I want more. . . As Mary takes flak from viewers for making the sticky pudding without dates and cooking a pie without a pastry base, one Tweeter noted: "She didn't use real rats in her ratatouille."

WELL done, DameVera Lynn, on reaching 100. The singer's centenary will doubtless be an excuse for yet more concerts in which people will dress up in uniforms they are not entitled to wear, sing songs they can't begin to understand and perpetuate the myth that the Second World War, far from being all bad, was a jolly sort of musical event. The rest of Europe, watching the Brits still singing about hanging out the washing on the Siegried Line, can only despair.

THE death of Ireland's 'man of peace' Martin McGuinness is a reminder of the gulf between what Whitehall says and what it does. The official line has always been: we never negotiate with terrorists. And yet the Government was secretly talking to McGuinness and his IRA cronies as early as the 1970s, but denied it for years. The Government's true position is as follows: we never negotiate with terrorists – unless we can.

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absolutely nothing about the colour. Our local DIY shop is now stocking Wellbeing and Urban Mystery.

I HAVE just trudged to the Post Office to pay the outstanding postage on a delivery from eBay. The firm advertised "fast and free delivery." It's certainly free if you don't put a stamp on it.

A COUPLE of readers have consulted their dictionaries to discover that "diarise," a word I scoffed at recently, actually exists. I will make three points. 1) If you need to use a dictionary to find it, then it's not a proper word; 2) My dictionary describes it as archaic; and 3) After 47 years in a profession which lives, breathes and exists around diaries, I've never heard it. Nonetheless, "diarise" does exist and I have takenonboard- arised your comments.

THE European Court of Justice has ruled that employers are entitled to ban staff from wearing "visible religious symbols," a move condemned by some Muslims as a direct attack on women wearing hijabs at work. I can't see it happening in Britain. How could any company ban the hijab in the office when the woman wearing it may have come to work on a bus driven by a turban-wearing Sikh? The intriguing social development is that while the number of young Sikh men wearing turbans is declining, the number of young Muslim women wearing headscarves is increasing. Why would that be?

POLITICAL correctness strikes in Westminster

where Roger Gale MP was castigated for calling his office staff "girls." As we should all know by now, calling women girls both infantilises and degrades them, making them appear the playthings and possessions of the outdated patriarchy which controls our society and all that stuff. I always feel sorry for women who object to this word, for presumably they never have a night out with the girls.

AS the education cuts bite, some schools are abandoning German lessons. It is sad although, as a colleague who endured five years of German once told me: "German is a useful language but has too many fahrits to be taken seriously".

IF we had known then what we know now. What odds do you think the bookies would have offered you in the 1970s on Chuck Berry living to be 90?

I WAS buying a widget from an online store I have used many times. But this time it wanted to know whether I was a new or existing customer. As soon as it twigged I had shopped there earlier, it demanded my password which I have, of course, long forgotten. So the system emailed me a new password. But the moment I tried to use it, up came the message: "This connection is not secure. Logins entered here could be compromised." Well done, the geeks. They have scared off another customer.

I HAD a Freemasonish sort of moment, reading the many comments on George Osborne becoming editor of London's Evening Standard, posted on the journalists' website, Hold the Front Page. One comment consisted of four squiggles in Teeline. It was a pungent and obscene invitation to go away, George. It could be read only by the dwindling band of us who still use shorthand.

TALKING POINT



Youngsters need to look back in wonder

OLD age creeps up on us all, but as for all this hogwash about 70 being the new 40? Do me a favour.

Having passed the half century mark, with the wrinkles, receding hair and expanding waistline, to show for it, I am quite happy to admit I'm past it.

I wish people would stop trying to maintain their youth with ridiculous fitness regimes, skin treatments and clothes shopping from a 25-year-old's perspective.

Older folk are supposed to have no idea what is going on in 'the charts' if they are still called that! I wouldn't even know if I could still go into a 'record shop' and buy something which is in the, what we would term as 'hit parade'!

Popular culture is thrown around as something us oldies should have some kind of knowledge about and we do try, honest, despite the smirks from our younger relatives – but just wait one minute, that works both ways baby...

How many times do we hear from the mouths of babes – the Beatles? Nah, I think they're rubbish, besides, my musical journey started with S Club 7...

Oh yeah? Well perhaps when the music of Lennon and McCartney is actually on the school curriculum today's youngsters, who might be in their 40s and parents themselves by then, will rue the time when they snubbed the greatest popular songwriters in history.

Yes I know it's a cloak of youth to wear to show that they aren't into what their mums, dads and grandparents are into, but I think you find out about life as much looking backwards as forwards and this is, in a nutshell, the problem we have as we face a post-Brexit Britain, or should that be England, and whoever else is left. The next generation will be completely future-biased, if they aren't already. Nostalgia-yearning-syndrome may by then be a recognised psychological disorder and sufferers will be locked away in plush white rooms with virtual reality gear, forced into playing the latest life-changing 'video game', or whatever they are called these days – sorry!

I only hope that children I see around me loosen up a little bit as they get older as getting my oldest lad to even consider the possibility of partaking in an alcoholic beverage seems less likely than Glenn Miller's remains being found buried under the Great Wall of China. I can remember that by the age of 12, I was being ushered into the backs of pubs, having my first taste of at least shandy.

Everything these days seems so strait-laced for youngsters, or is it youngsters seem so strait-laced? We need another punk revolution, perhaps it's time for us over-50s to dig out the safety-pin leather jackets and spike up what's left of our hair, start doing a bit of pogo-ing, to get them in the mood for a bit of anarchy. Better be careful of our dodgy backs though...

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Common sense advice not sexism

A LADY judge states the obvious and inevitably gets slated by rampant feminists. On her last day as a judge she advised that although it is every woman's right to go out and get as blotto as they wish, or to do whatever with their own bodies, from her years of experience of rape cases it was quite obvious that potential rapists will gravitate to a woman who, because she may be drunk, is an easier victim.

She did not in any way try to dictate lifestyle. She did not in any way blame the woman but was merely pointing out the facts. She also added that it was often the case that rapes under these circumstances are not reported and, even when they are, it is difficult to assemble enough evidence to convict as often the victim cannot remember.

Whether man or a woman, one should always be aware that there are some just waiting for us to lower our guard. It is just common sense, not sexism, to suggest that you avoid a potentially dangerous situation.

ALAN M ETHERIDGE
Dudley

Nazi victory would have been worse

THE SS-GB TV series about life under German rule, assuming that they had won the war, is very interesting.

I suspect that it would actually have been even worse. I remember a visiting priest told us in his sermon that he had met a German whose job was to arrange the transportation of every British man to Germany, once they had won the war. Presumably once in Germany they would have been kept in labour camps.

It seems that Hitler had decided that the only way he could rule Great Britain was if he virtually annihilated the nation. And he was probably right.

Another scenario I envisage is, if the Germans had invaded and got a foothold in Britain, then the British Government under Churchill may have attempted to give a gun to every man in the country.

These and other possibilities are horrific. Thank God we won the Battle of Britain.

MR G BETTELEY
Sedgley

Age discrimination will get on your PIP

AS I worked with Motability for 30 years until retirement I read with interest the opinions regarding the benefit to some of those unfortunate to need it.

In The Chronicle was a letter complaining about the new benefit PIP (Personal Independence Payment), which has replaced the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance. I think it should be pointed out that as this benefit has been around for many years, starting for limbless ex-servicemen following the war.

Things have to change, many more people are helped now. But there are limits to what the taxpayer can fund and, although the Government increases the amount every year, it will not keep up with demand, especially as it is often paid indefinitely.

It does not cease at 65 even though it cannot be claimed for at that age, something I am surprised has not been challenged in court as age discrimination.

RON GWILLIAMS
Brierley Hill

The Lords may be next

PERHAPS our Lordships in the House of Lords should remember that one of the main reasons why many have voted to leave Europe was not immigration or any of the other things the remainers tell us we did not understand, but it was also to remove the unelected bureaucrats telling us what we can do and what we cannot do with nothing we can do about them.

We can vote out our own Government if they prove unsatisfactory or fail to do as we want.

I would ask their Lordships, could you be the next layer of unelected bureaucrats to lose out on the next referendum if you defy the wish of the people?

This applies particularly to those Lordships who have a vested interest in remaining because they may lose their European income.

EWART J JOHNSON
Warley

Speeders will take no notice

WITH reference to your article re speed limits. To me this is a waste of time as so few people take notice even with lights flashing.

On the A456 in Hayley Green I am regularly being overtaken by people doing 50 to 60-plus miles an hour even when the lights are flashing. The only time they travel slower is when it is very busy. Most of the time they are speeding, particularly at weekends. Some people think laws don't apply to them. I would also mention Hagley Wood Lane, which is a winding lane.

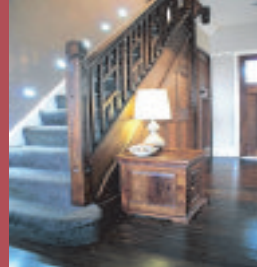
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FIVE MINUTES FROM MERRY HILL

Transit site for travellers plan backed by councillors

COUNCILLORS have backed a plan to create a temporary transit site for travellers in Sandwell. The site in Smethwick would see groups pay £80 per caravan per week to pitch up for a short stay – plus a £250 deposit for each group.

The idea was given the go-ahead at last Wednesday's cabinet meeting and a full planning application will now be submitted. The transit site is a multi-agency approach between Sandwell Council and West Midlands Police.

And with it, police will be able to use previously unavailable powers to immediately remove unauthorised encampments from council land and order travellers to move to the transit site within an agreed time.

The police strongly support the council creating a transit site.

Groups who refuse to move to the transit site could be directed from the borough by the police and prevented from returning for three months.

The council has dealt with more than 85 unauthorised encampments this financial year with the cost of clean-ups, site security, bailiffs and court costs adding up to more than £250,000 in 2016/17. Unauthorised encampments also take up large amounts of time for both the council and the police.

Sandwell Council's cabinet member for regeneration Councillor Paul Moore said: "By creating a transit site, the police can unlock additional legal powers to order an unauthorised encampment to relocate to the transit site. Our hope is that this would significantly reduce the amount of money the council spends on cleaning up after unauthorised encampments."

"The transit site is one of several actions we're taking to tackle the issue of trespassing on council land in Sandwell. We would be the only area in the West Midlands to be using these

By David Banner

special police powers. Last year, 30 per cent of the unauthorised encampments in the whole of the West Midlands were located in Sandwell.

"Potentially, given we will have spent in excess of a quarter of a million pounds on dealing with them this financial year, the transit site could pay for itself very quickly. We need to reduce the amount of disruption and upset that unauthorised encampments cause for our communities."

The land identified for the transit site is derelict land off Boulton Road in Smethwick that used to have flats and maisonettes built on it before they were demolished 15 years ago. The site is isolated and not overlooked.

The site would have room for up to 34 caravans that would be charged £80 per week per caravan, plus a £250 deposit for each group staying there. There would be strict rules in place on littering and behaviour.

The compound would have security fencing and toilet and washing facilities in a converted shipping container. The cost of creating the site would be around £195,000. Ch Supt Richard Baker from Sandwell Police said: "We fully support Sandwell Council's approach of developing a transit site within the borough."

No ifs or butts for goat-breeding hopes



Stockman Wayne Vale with Tom and Jerry, the rare breed Bagot goats at Forge Mill Farm in

FARMERS are busy working on a special breeding programme to increase a stock of rare goats. The farmers at Forge Mill Farm at Sandwell Valley hope that the programme will increase the stock in West Bromwich in order to preserve the breed.

The black and white Bagot goats are part of a conservation effort to increase their numbers as there are now fewer than 200 registered breeding females left.

The council is helping with the scheme to breed the goats naturally and by artificial insemination methods in a project run by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust.

Melissa Underwood-Grattage, working farm manager at Sandwell Valley, said the Bagot goats are owned by the RBST and in the care of Sandwell staff to care for as an approved farm park.

Farmers helped with the work during a month-long fertility programme. She said: "We have also successfully bred the other four nanny goats and the first of them gave birth on February 28. The offspring from these goats will form part of our breeding stock here at the country park."

Tech suites on the way to libraries

NEW 'tech suites' – with iPads, virtual reality headsets, robotics and 3D printing – are coming to a library in each of Sandwell's six towns following a boost from Arts Council England.

Sandwell Council successfully bid for £85,840 to develop the suites at Oldbury, Blackheath, Tipton, Smethwick, Wednesbury and West Bromwich Central libraries.

Councillor Richard Marshall, Sandwell Council's cabinet member for leisure, said: "This is fantastic news. Our libraries are already thriving community hubs and this money from Arts Council England will help us develop 'tech suites' at our six main town libraries."

"Bidding for this funding was very competitive and it is testament to the great work our libraries are already doing that Sandwell's bid was successful. Thanks to this grant, we will be able to use iPads to offer IT training to Sandwell residents, including those who may not feel confident online or don't have access to the internet."

"We will be able to show them how to use iPads and set up a MySandwell account where they can report problems, pay bills and request services from the council online 24/7."

"We will also be getting lots of great tech that children and young people will love."

This dynamic lecture adds up to inspiration

HALESOWEN College received a visit from an eminent researcher in the field of applied science and mathematics, Dr Takeshi Akinaga.

Students of A-Level Mathematics and Physics were inspired by an informative lecture on fluid dynamics. Dr Akinaga, a former research fellow at Kansai University in Japan, is a research fellow at Aston University.

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Talented poet published after her tragic death

A YOUNG woman killed at a bus stop by a motorist racing at 100mph on a Black Country road is to have a book of her poems published.

Former Stourbridge student Rebecca McManus, 21, died after a Mitsubishi Evolution hit into her as she waited for a bus beside Hagley Road West, Bearwood, in May 2014.

Rebecca died at the scene, only a few hundred yards from her home, and her friend Harriet Barnsley suffered life-changing injuries in the incident which was the result of two men racing high-performance cars.

The promising poet from Oldbury was a Literature and Creative Writing student at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, where an event launching the book was being held in her memory last week.

Her friends, tutors and current students were reading her poems at the event.

Almost three years after her death, Rebecca's work is being published posthumously by her parents.

Gift

The 180-page book, entitled *A Book of Fragments and Dreams*, published by Unthank Publications, was the brainchild of Rebecca's mother Cathy McManus.

Mrs McManus said: "She had a natural gift for poetry and had individual poems previously published, and it seems fitting, as it was one of Rebecca's ambitions.

"Rebecca had always hoped to have at least one book published and she had already chosen the title for the book. We hope it will provide inspiration for other young poets."

The book features 159 poems, with subject matters including the chang-



The cover of the book that features more than 150 of Rebecca's poems including of the seasons, romance and the wonders of the sky. Proceeds from the book will be donated to charity.

Two men were jailed for their roles in the fatal crash.

Garage manager Sukvinder Mannan, of Roundhills Road, Halesowen, who was at the wheel of the Mitsubishi which struck Rebecca, admitted causing death and injury by dangerous driving and was sentenced to eight years in prison.

He had been driving at 101mph in a 40mph zone.

The motorist he had been racing, Inderjit Singh, of Cranbourne Avenue, Wolverhampton, was jailed for a year



Student Rebecca McManus had always hoped to publish a book after admitting dangerous driving in his BMW M3.

The book is available for £9.99 and can be ordered from bookshops as well as online from Amazon, The Wordery and Book Depository.

The court heard how Mannan careered into a bus stop where he struck childhood friends Rebecca and Harriet. Singh pulled out of the race just seconds before the impact.

Following the court case, Rebecca's family said their lives were 'empty without her' and that they had been 'sentenced to a lifetime of pain and grief'.

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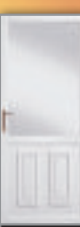
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10 Sikh women spotlight is championed

A SANDWELL councillor, who was named among the most inspirational Sikh woman in the UK, is backing a campaign championing women of the same faith.

Following the success of #350sikhwomen in January, the Sikh Network is now highlighting Sikh women from across the globe, putting the spotlight on one Sikh woman each day for the next 350 days.

The Sikh Network launched the #350sikhwomen campaign, which started by celebrating Sikh women in history, before going on to recognise Sikh women in the UK in different fields including charity, politics, media, and entertainment.

Sikh women took to the stage to share their inspiring stories and celebrate their achievements with diverse audiences, and the campaign gained such traction that there were calls from across the globe, particularly from India and the US to also give focus to women outside the UK.

Sandwell councillor Preet Kaur Gill, Sikh Network adviser, said: "We firmly believe that we have a core responsibility to champion Sikh women internationally."

Follow the campaign on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and nominate women by contacting the Sikh Network directly via www.thesikhnetwork.com

Man in 70s suffers head injury in fall

AN ELDERLY man has been taken to hospital with a serious head injury after he was found unconscious in an alley in Brierley Hill.

The man, in his 70s, was found in the passage near the Bell Inn in Delph Road just before 7am this morning.

A detective from West Midlands Police said there was no criminal involvement and the man fell over. Two pupils from Thorns Community Centre found the man and gave first aid.

Display on war hero Bill Savage to tie in with 75th

Anna to run Paris streets for hospice

A FUNDRAISER will be travelling to the French capital to take part in the annual Paris marathon, in support of Mary Stevens Hospice.

Anna Swingler, from Stourbridge, chose to support the Hagley Road hospice following the passing of her nan, Pat, who spent time in the hospice during her battle with cancer.

The 26.2 mile run on April 9 will take 25-year-old and the expected 35,000 other runners on a unique tour of the historic city, past landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower, the Arc De Triomphe and Notre Dame Cathedral.

Anna said: "The hospice in Stourbridge cared for my nan when she was suffering from cancer. I was so impressed with all the care the staff provided. The help that they provide to patients is remarkable.

"If I can raise even a tiny amount for this hospice it will make all the miles, training and time worth it."

Laura Millard, community engagement officer, Mary Stevens Hospice Group, said: "She's a remarkable woman. To run a marathon in itself is really quite incredible, but to travel all the way to Paris to do it in the name of the hospice is something so special.

"Our relationship with Anna was obviously born out of incredibly difficult circumstances, and for her to use such a tough situation as the motivation to do something wonderful for families in the same situation is just the most amazing show of strength and selflessness."

Donate at www.justgiving.com/fundraising/anna-swingler



Anna Swingler is to run the Paris marathon next month in memory of her nan

A SPECIAL display to mark the 75th anniversary of a major Second World War operation has been set up at Smethwick Library to commemorate the event and a brave local serviceman who was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Able Seaman Bill Savage was awarded the Victoria Cross for his courage during Operation Chariot, a raid on the French port of St Nazaire where German warships were repaired during the occupation of France.

Sandwell Council is marking the anniversary with a special artwork display to remember again the remarkable story of Bill Savage who died at his gun after his show of valour.

The display at Smethwick Library in High Street started its run on Tuesday, which was the actual anniversary of Bill Savage's heroic actions. The library is open Mondays and Tuesdays 10am-5.30pm, Wednesdays to Fridays 10am-5pm, Saturdays 10am-4pm and Sundays 12noon-4pm.

Bill, who was born in the Cape Hill area, was working at Cape Hill Brewery when he volunteered for military service and joined the Royal Navy.

Destroy

In March 1942, he was the forward gunlayer in charge of the main gun on one of a small fleet of wooden gunboats alongside HMS Campbelltown that set out to attack and destroy the port.

Bill was highly-praised for his firing of the gun which led to enemy fire becoming ineffective and silenced.

His bravery led to him being posthumously being awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest award for valour for soldiers in the Second World War.

His citation recalls his "great gallantry, skill and devotion" to duty, and records that he kept up the same vigorous and accurate fire against attacking ships until he was killed at his gun.

The citation records that the Victo-



Hero - Able Seaman Bill Savage

ria Cross was awarded in recognition not only of the gallantry and devotion to duty of Bill, but also the valour shown by many other unnamed servicemen.

His Victoria Cross and other medals are now looked after by the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.

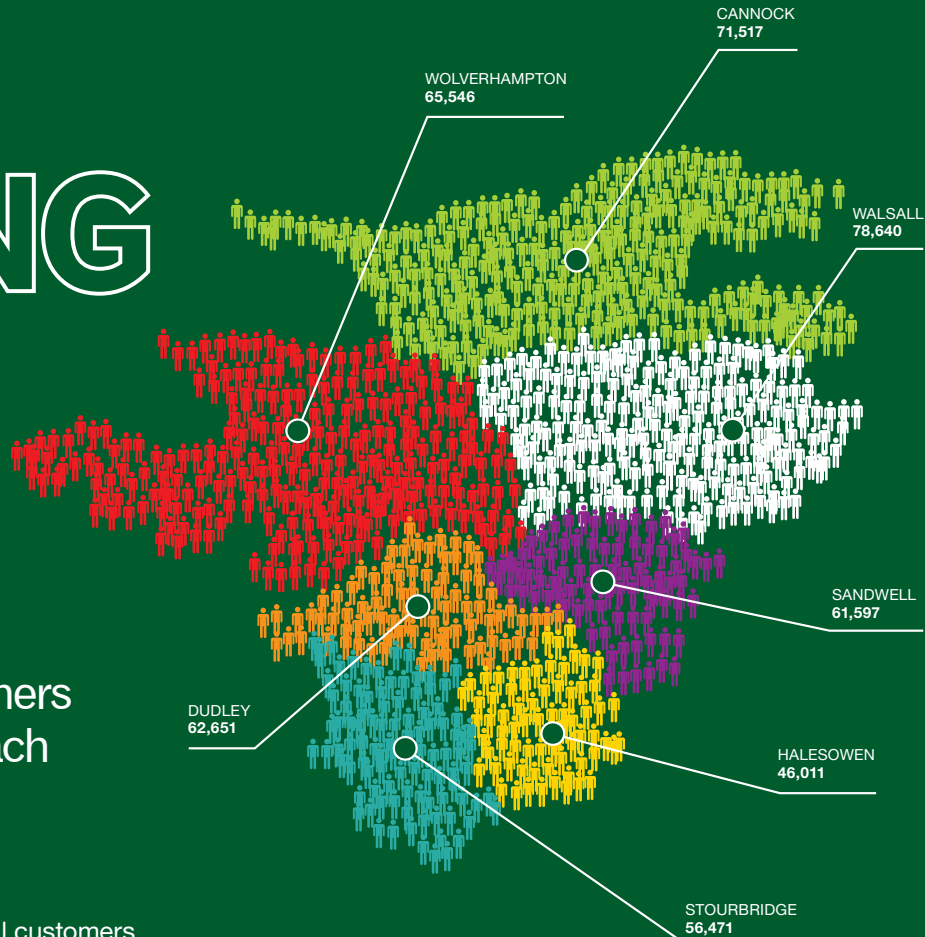
Mayor of Sandwell Councillor Julie Webb said: "It's important to remember the brave actions of Bill Savage VC, and those of other unnamed servicemen, 75 years on from the raid on St Nazaire. This display at Smethwick Library gives local people - including children and young people - the opportunity to hear Bill's story."

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New classrooms at safari park

A £1 million 'academy' for visiting school groups will be unveiled at the West Midlands Safari Park this summer.

Featuring five classrooms, the Safari Academy has been designed for visiting pupils. Each classroom will be equipped to provide interactive education for all ages, from nurseries to university students and adult learners. Groups can take part in a variety of activities, including curriculum linked tours and hands-on discovery sessions, including encounters with some of the park's smaller, friendlier animals.

Caroline Richards, the head of learning at the safari park, said: "This new state-of-the-art eco-building will allow us to grow our educational services to meet the needs of the local community and inspire even more young conservationists of the future."

The Safari Academy at the attraction near Kidderminster will also be home to accredited level two and three animal care courses.

Julie gets a lifetime achievement accolade



Julie Walters has become one of Britain's favourite actors

BLACK Country star Julie Walters has been honoured with a lifetime achievement award by the Royal Television Society.

The Harry Potter actress, who is also well-known for her work with the late Victoria Wood, picked up her award at a ceremony in London last week.

It recognised the Smethwick-born former nurse for a career in film and television that began on stage in Liverpool and has spanned more than 40 years.

The 67-year-old joked that it was the 'old people's award'. She added: "It's absolutely gorgeous, I'm thrilled."

Julie found fame in 1983 when she played a hairdresser with a thirst for knowledge, opposite Michael Caine as a boozey literature professor, in the hit movie Educating Rita.

She went on to have major roles in Billy Elliot, Personal Services, Calendar Girls, Mamma Mia!, epic TV series Indian Summers and as Molly Weasley in seven of the Harry Potter films.

Her plans this year include work on a new Mary Poppins movie, second Paddington movie and a trains documentary.

Day of praise for care and social workers

THE 'brilliant contribution' of social workers and care professionals will have been honoured by councillors.

Dudley Council was marking World Social Work Day last Friday by thanking its existing care workforce on social media.

But it has also urged those looking for work to look at a number of existing vacancies being advertised within children and adult's social care.

Councillor Ian Cooper, cabinet member for children's services, said: "We are pleased to have been described as being focussed, ambitious and creative by Government social care commissioner Eleanor Brazil, and are well on our way with our improvement journey in Dudley."

"We want to sing the benefits of the comprehensive learning and development programme we offer for all social workers, and we guarantee our employees will be supported every step of the way."

Academy first to win gold award for preparing pupils

STUDENTS and staff at a Black Country academy are celebrating after becoming the first school in the country to be credited as a 'gold' standard institution.

The award recognises excellence in careers advice at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy (OSCA).

The school in Tividale is celebrating after achieving the highest standard in the quality in careers standard award programme, credited by Prospects.

It is awarded to schools and educa-

tion providers who demonstrate the importance placed on careers, and the vital support given to students to help decide about their next steps after leaving school.

It follows the academy securing The Investors in People Silver Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Success

The announcement also follows the success of Debbie Laird, the academy's lead for careers education, who has recently been nationally recognised for her commitment. She won the Securing Futures accolade at the Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT) awards.

Ms Laird has worked during the past three years at the school to create a careers and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme that ensures students are inspired, confident and equipped for their next steps in life.

Ms Laird said: "To achieve the gold standard is a great achievement for our academy. This award showcases our excellent practice and how we encourage our students to be aware of their next steps and what opportunities are available to them beyond the school gates."

"Our staff and students are delighted with the recognition."



Debbie Laird

Homes plan for old landfill site

DOZENS of homes for the elderly are set to be built on a former landfill site.

The land, off Moor Lane in Rowley Regis, is earmarked for 60 one-bedroom flats and 30 two-bedroom flats with communal facilities for adult social care.

The Sandwell Council scheme went before members of the cabinet last week, where plans to submit a planning application were approved.

A council report states: "The site was historically used for landfill purposes and this proposal would result in it being brought back into beneficial use."

The site, which is near Rowley Regis Hospital, has previously been occasionally used by travelling circuses and fairgrounds.

Council leader Steve Eling said: "We have got a lot of elderly people in the borough and this is really a positive move."

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Reminder of home comforts



A well-known war song



Another one from the collection



Word by Jimmy Kennedy



Dame Vera Lynn in her prime



John Sparry has collection of sheet music

Songs which helped nation win two wars

A COLLECTION of rare music and lyrics from some favourite wartime songs is being lovingly preserved.

The collection from the First and Second World Wars has been built up by Wall Heath musician John Sparry over the last 25 years.

Jazz musician Mr Sparry decided to dig out the pristine collection in honour of forces' sweetheart Dame Vera Lynn who celebrated her 100th birthday last week. Songs by Dame Vera in the collection include If I Had My Way and That Lovely Weekend.

Mr Sparry said: "I've been collecting these songs for over 25 years. They're all from the First and Second World Wars and they all have their own story.

MEMORY LANE

Report by Pippa Armstrong

"In the collection there's one called Some Chicken, Some Neck which was inspired by then Prime Minister Winston Churchill's speech in Ottawa.

"There's The Handsome Territorial, whose words are by Jimmy Kennedy who wrote the words to the Teddy Bear's picnic.

"Ma I Miss Your Apple Pie was a song for soldiers far from home. Adolf is a song by Annette Mills, who was the sister of John Mills and originator of TV's Muffin the Mule."

The collection includes songs from both world wars with the oldest dating back to the 1910s.

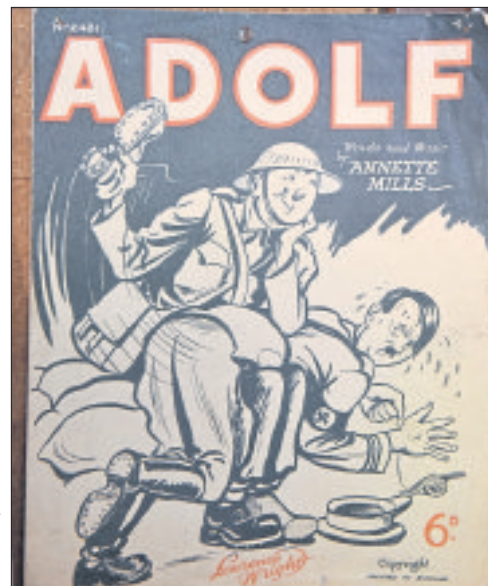
Mr Sparry is unsure of their current value, only knowing their original cost which ranged from

an old sixpence to a shilling. He broke out the collection to help mark Dame Vera Lynn's landmark birthday.

Dame Vera is credited as a source of inspiration for soldiers and their loved ones during the Second World War due to her uplifting songs, which included We'll Meet Again and There'll Always be an England.

She became widely known as the forces' sweetheart after she travelled long distances, often at great personal risk, to entertain troops and provide them with messages of hope.

To celebrate her 100th birthday, Dame Vera released an album featuring re-orchestrated versions of her most loved music alongside her original vocals. It is thought the collection makes Dame Vera the first singer to have released a new album as a centenarian.



The songs were designed to boost war-time morale

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Concern over mine shaft halts plan for pub site

AN APPLICATION to demolish an 'eyesore' former pub has been rejected by Dudley Council due to safety concerns.

Plans to demolish The Horse and Jockey pub, in Ivyhouse Lane, Coseley, to build eight homes was refused due to the location of a mineshaft underneath.

The former pub has stood empty for around six years.

A planning report states: "The site falls within a development high risk area and contains a mine entry and its zone of influence.

"The exact location of the mine entry is unknown and its location has not informed the site layout to ensure that adequate separation is provided between this feature and the proposed building.

"In the absence of such information it has not been demonstrated

that the site is safe, stable and suitable for development."

Councillor Susan Ridney said: "I'm disappointed by the decision as it's a real eyesore and something needs to be done.

"It was a nice looking building before it was vandalised. I was quite happy to see that someone wanted to build apartments on there but it's a shame it was turned down.

"Vandals have tried to set the building on fire a couple of times."

But Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for regeneration, said: "The application was refused because the developer was unwilling to provide additional information about the exact location of a mine-shaft. Should that information be forthcoming, the council would be in a position to determine the application."



'Eyesore' - the boarded-up Horse and Jockey pub in Ivyhouse Lane, Coseley, has become a target for vandals

Progress in council children's services

DUDLEY Council's children's social care service has been praised by education watchdog Ofsted for its efforts to improve services for children and young people.

It comes a year after the service, which includes adoption, fostering and child protection, was rated 'inadequate' by Ofsted.

But the latest monitoring visit by inspections in February states Dudley Council is making 'positive progress' in a number of key areas but cautions that 'a number of areas continue to require development'.

The watchdog says staff morale is 'good' and that social workers now have more time to see children because caseloads have 'reduced significantly' and so have become more manageable.

Inspectors said the council continued to 'appropriately address areas of concern' and that, as a result, a greater number of children were receiving 'the right response at the right time'. The council had taken immediate action to ensure 'no child was unsafe' by setting up a new dedicated team to make sure no cases had been left unallocated to social workers.

'Irritated' shops boss pulls plug on revamp

A DUDLEY town centre shopping centre has pulled out of plans to revamp the town centre site, blaming a 'lack of dialogue' with council bosses.

The owner of the Trident Centre says there will now be 'no investment' in Dudley.

John Sykes, chairman of Atlantis Property which owns shopping centres across the country, said he had been irritated by his requests for meetings with council chiefs going ignored.

However, Dudley Council bosses insist they are committed to working with the company.

The row appears to have scuppered a major revamp of the shopping centre, as well as other buildings on High Street.

The renovation of the shopping centre had been included in a council blueprint to change the face of the town centre.

New shops and leisure attractions were to be added to the centre while the firm also wanted to create 185 apartments.

Frustration

But Mr Sykes says he has now decided not to go ahead with the plans due to his frustration with the authority.

He explained: "There will be absolutely no building or re-development of the Trident Centre while these people are in power.

"As an investor I want to meet and have a dialogue.

"We were very much for this development. We commissioned an architect and would have been submitting

1,000 jobs at risk due to Brantano collapse

FOOTWEAR retailer Brantano has gone into administration, putting more than a thousand jobs at risk.

It operates around a dozen branches across the West Midlands that could now be under threat. The group, owned by private equity firm Alteri, has experienced difficult trading conditions. The falling value of the pound has made it more expensive for retailers to import goods such as shoes from abroad.

Administrator PwC said redundancies would be 'inevitable'. Brantano operates 73 stores and 64 concessions across Britain, employing 1,086 staff. Locally the chain has branches at the Crown Wharf Shopping Park in Walsall, and the Oldbury Green Retail Park. There are also outlets in several garden centres.

PwC said that despite 'sustained efforts and streamlining' to make the business more commercially viable a attempt to sell Brantano had been unsuccessful.

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Let me live in peace, says former suspect

A FORMER suspect in the 1978 murder of paperboy Carl Bridgewater murder has spoken of his delight that Staffordshire Police has decided not to re-open its investigation.

But an author from Bridgnorth, who has campaigned to get the case re-opened, called it 'a sad day for justice'.

Ex-ambulanceman Bert Spencer, a convicted murderer for the shooting of an acquaintance, has lived under a cloud of suspicion that he killed the 13-year-old newspaper delivery boy.

He was interviewed by criminologist Professor David Wilson for a TV documentary, which cast doubt on his alibi.

Calls were made after the screening in June for police to investigate claims by the programme makers. The Staffordshire force launched a review but announced last week that it was taking no further action.

Happy

Mr Spencer, 77, said: "I needed this police report. I knew what it would say but I needed them to say it. I'm a happy man."

He has always denied the shooting of schoolboy, Carl who is believed to have disturbed a burglary at Yew Tree Farm, near Stourbridge, when delivering newspapers.

Mr Spencer, a former neighbour of the Bridgewater family in Wordsley, was chief suspect in the police inquiry but he was ruled out after a work colleague gave an account placing Mr Spencer away from the scene of the crime.

Mr Spencer later served time in prison for shooting dead 70-year-old Hubert Wilkes at a farmhouse close to the scene of Carl's death.

His name continued to come up in



Bert Spencer



Carl Bridgewater

each new review of the case, which also resulted in a miscarriage of justice. The 'Bridgewater Four' - Patrick Molloy, James Robinson and cousins Michael Hickey and Vincent Hickey - were convicted, imprisoned but cleared 18 years later. Molloy died in prison.

This week police said there were 'no grounds' to interview Spencer again.

The pensioner, who now lives in Lincolnshire, said he hopes that he can live out his latter years in peace.

Following the 90-minute Channel 4 programme, parents of pupils at a nearby school voiced concerns about the proximity of an alleged child-killer. He later suffered a mild stroke.

"That has all calmed down now and I hope that this latest statement from the police will kill it completely," he

said. "It's been frustrating living with Wilson's accusations hanging over me but there was nothing to find, the programme was based on speculation and deceit. I don't know if this will ever go away completely."

But Simon Golding, from Bridgnorth, who has written a book, *Scapegoat for Murder: The Truth About the Killing of Carl Bridgewater*, and worked on the TV documentary, vowed to carry on campaigning for the case to be re-opened.

"I will not let this tragedy be swept under the carpet," he said. "There was no great great shock in reading that the police are not going to re-open the case."

"It's a very sad day for justice and the search for the truth."

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Dancing diamond duo celebrate 60 years together

THEY met by chance as wedding guests of mutual friends twice before starting their own romance that has lasted 60 years.

Now this happy couple are celebrating their diamond wedding anniversary.

Sheila and Ron Knight, of Rowley Regis, first met at a wedding for one of Sheila's friends. She had been on her own and was introduced to Ron.

Blossomed

The pair enjoyed the party before going their separate ways, until they met at another wedding a few months later. From there they decided to meet up again and love blossomed.

Sheila said: "We got along straight away and it was strange that we kept meeting at these weddings. It started to feel like we were com-

pelled towards one another. He was very easy to talk to and he drove an Austin Nippy, which was a great bonus."

Keen dancers Sheila, now 79, and Ron, now 84, started off their courting days by going dancing on the weekends at the Red Warrior Club in Earlswood, while they both worked in Smethwick during the week, Ron as a mechanic and Sheila as an office worker.

They got engaged after two years and married on March 23, 1957, with a service held at St Matthew's Church followed by a reception at the New Church Inn, both in Smethwick.

They have two sons Stephen, 57, and Ian, 48, and celebrated at a meal with family, including grandchildren Lewis, Jessica and Molly.



Ron and Sheila Knight from Rowley Regis are celebrating their diamond wedding

Forged bank notes put drug addict behind bars

A TRAVELLER who tried to buy an iPhone 7 with counterfeit notes at Merry Hill Shopping Centre has been jailed for three years.

Patrick McCarthy, of no fixed abode, had used more than £1,000 worth of fake notes across the country from September to January this year, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The 23-year-old pleaded guilty to the three offences of tendering and possessing fake English and Scottish notes. He had sent an accomplice into the Vodafone shop in Merry Hill on January 5, who bought an iPhone 7 with fake Scottish notes. When, a short while after, McCarthy went into the shop to buy a phone with similar notes, staff alerted police.

Howard Searle, prosecuting, said: "This was one of several offences

over the matter of a few months."

McCarthy had been arrested in Daventry on September 5 when around £220 in counterfeit English £20 notes were discovered on him. He was released on bail but detained by police in Worcester less than a month later with £180 in fake £20 notes. He was also the subject of two suspended sentences for previous offences.

Rashad Mohammed, defending, described McCarthy as from 'the travelling community'. He said: "He was addicted to class A drugs and was trying to pay off a debt related to this."

McCarthy was sentenced to two years for tendering the notes, one year to run consecutively for the offences in October and September and a six-month suspended sentence.

BMet again told that it must improve

A COLLEGE with sites in the Black Country has been told that it still requires improvement by education watchdog Ofsted.

Birmingham Metropolitan College provides further and higher education to around 20,000 learners across four sites, including Stourbridge and Brierley Hill.

Ofsted says BMet 'requires improvement' following an inspection in February. The same judgement was also given after its inspection in May 2015.

Key concerns included attendance rates, the lack of challenge to students and poor progress.

In their latest report, Ofsted inspectors state: "Teachers' expectations of learners are too low and do not sufficiently promote or reinforce the demands of employers, such as full attendance, punctuality and dress code."

Slow

"Teachers set too many unchallenging tasks where learners work at the same level and become bored and do not concentrate sufficiently. In these cases, learners make slow progress and fail to demonstrate the culture of respect that teachers are trying to create."

The majority of those studying at the college full-time are aged 16 to 18.

However, there was some praise for how the college

had 'stabilised' its financial difficulties.

Andrew Cleaves, principal and chief executive at BMet, said: "The recent report from Ofsted acknowledged that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment at BMet has improved across the board since our previous inspection. However, we are only part of the way through this journey and we acknowledge that there is much work to do."

"Whilst it has been a challenging time for BMet over the last two years, we have made good progress. We are particularly pleased that Ofsted rated our apprenticeship provision as being good."

"BMet has high aspirations. With the continued hard work of our dedicated team, I am confident that we will meet the challenges ahead and will continue to provide excellent education for many thousands of learners."

Guest speaker put the 'ad' into academy

A TOP businessman visit students in Cradley Heath to talk with them about resilience, positive energy and learning from mistakes.

Robert Senior, worldwide CEO of leading advertising agency Saatchi and Saatchi, visited more than 200 students and staff at Ormiston Forge Academy.

Mr Senior was responsible for some of the most memorable ad campaigns over the last few years including the famous 'drumming gorilla' advert for Cadbury. Saatchi and Saatchi's other clients include Asda, HSBC, Toyota and many more.

During the visit Mr Senior discussed views on leadership, the process of planning and the importance of listening. He also answered questions posed by A level students.

Mr Senior said: "It was an absolute pleasure to visit Ormiston Forge Academy. I was struck and inspired by the energy and openness of both staff and pupils."

He visited as part of the Speakers for School initiative which is celebrating its fifth anniversary.

It brings together 35 leading figures in public life from diverse backgrounds to deliver individual talks in state schools and colleges throughout the country.



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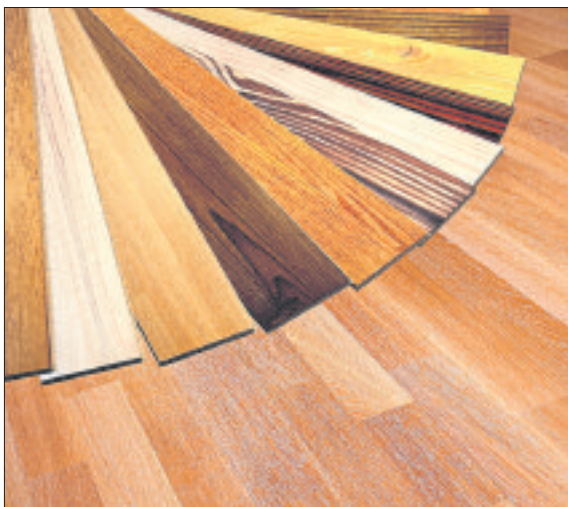


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A selection of different types of floorboard

Wood floor can be straightforward DIY job

If your home has period floorboards, you've got a head start, but if not, installing a wooden floor can be a straightforward DIY job says Julia Gray

1. To expose and enjoy your home's period floorboards, uncover them, do any repairs and sand them with an industrial floor sander and edger – which is hard, hot and dusty work. Although more expensive, employing someone to sand them for you is often worth it, and they usually include the cost of the wood stain or varnish in the price. They should also be able to do the job quicker than you can and should have better sanders than those available from hire shops. Another problem with doing it yourself is that you can get ridges in the boards from not using the floor sander properly.

2. Period floorboards often have more modern boards mixed in where repairs have been done over the years. You can, of course, replace the new boards with period ones, but there's no guarantee that the colour will match perfectly when sanded, and it can be hard to find ones the same width, especially if your boards are an unusual width.

3. Painting them makes it easier to disguise the new boards than with wood stain or varnish, al-

though dark stains and varnishes can work really well. Painting floorboards white is a classic look and will go with any wall colour, although it isn't the most practical choice for high-traffic areas of the home. If you use a water-based white floor paint, such as Ronseal Diamond Hard Floor Paint, you may have to do several coats until the colour is even. An oil-based white floor paint will cover in fewer coats, but it's likely to yellow, so if you want the boards to stay white, use a water-based paint. The latter is also ideal if you need to use the room that day because it will dry quickly.

4. If you don't have period floorboards or you'd prefer not to expose them, consider laying wood or wood-effect flooring. Laminate flooring, which has a picture of wood printed onto the boards, is an inexpensive way to get the look, but laminate isn't as fashionable as it once was. If you want the real thing, other types of wooden flooring are now as easy to fit as laminate and can be reasonably priced. Boards that simply click and fit together are widely available in both engineered wood and solid wood flooring.

5. Engineered wood flooring has a top layer of real wood, with other layers underneath. The thickness of the wood layer varies – make sure you know how thick it is, as thicker layers can be sanded. A floor that can be sanded a few times is a good in-

vestment because it can take more wear and tear. Engineered wood is often a more practical choice than solid wood flooring because the layers give it added strength and durability. Unlike solid wood, it shouldn't shrink and expand when exposed to moisture.

PRODUCTS OF THE WEEK

If you want a floor paint that looks good and dries fast, try Ronseal Diamond Hard Floor Paint (from £15.82 for 750ml, B&Q), which can be used on interior concrete and stone floors as well as floorboards. It's designed to protect against scuffs, spills and scratches and comes in lots of different colours, so there should be one to suit your scheme.

If yellow patches keep coming through as you paint your floorboards, only a stain block will solve the problem. An aerosol stain block is a good choice because it dries faster than stain block you paint on. Ronseal Quick Drying Stain Block aerosol (£8 for 400ml, B&Q) is just the thing – apply thin coats until the stain is covered, allowing each coat to dry for 10 minutes before applying the next. This aerosol can be used on other surfaces, too.

HOW-TO TIP

When painting wooden floorboards, thin the first coat of wood primer or primer/undercoat you apply – with water if it's water based or white spirit if it's oil based – so it soaks into the boards better.

Marking four decades of transforming stars' homes

By Gabrielle Fagan

CELEBRATING 40 years of transforming rooms with her calm-yet-dramatic aesthetic, Kelly Hoppen's new book invites readers into her own past and present homes.

"Creating a sense of theatre is essential in any living space," declares Kelly Hoppen, and the dramatic settings in her home, a converted auction house in central London, amply prove her point.

"I bought the building as a shell with nothing but a floor, an impressively high ceiling and the structural columns," she says proudly, gesturing at the vast open-plan living area which runs from an entrance hall at one end through to the study at the other, with living and dining areas in between.

The space is decorated in her signature shades of taupe and white. "I'm not frightened of colour, but neutrals are who I am. It's worked as my signature colourway for 40 years and I'll continue the Hoppen style," she insists.

"I passionately believe a palette of neutrals – whether taupe, sand or cream based – can provide a serene and harmonious backdrop, against which to layer the colour and activity in your life. I like the way they make me feel, as much as they way they look.

"But whichever family of neutrals I choose to work with on a project, textural contrast is always absolutely key, to add richness, depth and character," she adds.

Personality abounds throughout the home. The glamorous master bathroom – "probably my favourite room" – has a marble bath, set on an under-lit plinth, whose shape's inspired by a lotus flower.

"I also love our study, which is similar to a collector's room, housing a history of the old auction house as well as books, art and objects," she confides.

"I still believe open-plan is essential to the way we live. I love using glass partitions if I want to create intimate areas and add depth."

Her distinctive style philosophy has won her a portfolio of A-list clients, including David and Victoria Beckham, and now she reveals her decor secrets, and the wisdom that's helped make her internationally renowned, in her beautifully illustrated book, *House Of Hoppen*.

Only 13 when she realised she wanted to be an interior designer, taking on her first project three years later, Hoppen, 57, began her career extraordinarily young. "By the time I was 17, I'd bought and done up my own apartment in London's Chelsea, as well as setting up an office there," she recalls.

"Back then, everything came from a real intrigue and experience, rather than just opening a book and copying from it, which is what I feel people do today. My own style evolved in an organic way – it was intuitive."



The Study at Kelly Hoppen's home with desk designed by her; coffee table by Christian Liaigre and lights by Kevin Reilly



Westbourne velvet cushion, £95, available from Kelly Hoppen



Organic shaped ceramic vases from Kelly Hoppen.com



Kelly Hoppen in her hall at her home



Dining room at Kelly Hoppen's home

HOPPEN'S DECOR TIPS

COLOUR UP: Splashes of burgundy, dark grey, pastel pink, emerald green, and burnt orange will be the shades of this year.

EDGY MIX: An industrial look in design has made a comeback. "Using industrial materials, such as concrete, will automatically inject an urban feel into your home no matter what the location. This versatile material looks incredible contrasted with metals and textures. Mix it up with antiques which will shock and contrast beautifully

with this sleek look."

WAKE UP WALLS: "Wallpaper should be a wonderful, luxurious piece of texture, which draws you in but at the same time is a backdrop to whatever style you choose for your home," explains Hoppen.

NATURE NOTES: Bringing nature into the home is absolutely key, Hoppen declares. "I love organic trees which grow indoors, and Sixties-style plants such as palm trees and rubber plants, which are enjoying a revival."

Vandals target roadside trees

'SENSELESS' vandals have destroyed newly-planted trees along a busy road, causing thousands of pounds worth of damage.

Dudley Council discovered a number of Oriental Plane trees snapped in half along the Birmingham New Road, near to the new Aldi store.

The trees, which are protected by wire meshing, were planted just over a year ago to spruce up the heavily-used commuter route. Police have been informed and have confirmed they are investigating.

Dudley's environment boss Councillor Hilary Bills said: "This is senseless vandalism. It would have taken some effort to reach up above the fencing and snap them off, so this is not even a moment of madness.

"It will cost the council thousands of pounds to replace them - if we are even able to - at a time when we are battling to save millions of pounds due to ongoing Government cuts. The police have been informed."

Golden day as cyclist Helen receives MBE



Cyclist Helen Scott, from Halesowen, with her MBE

A SPORTS star from the Black Country has received her MBE at Buckingham Palace.

Cyclist Helen Scott, from Halesowen, received the honours from Prince Charles.

Scott, aged 26, joined her local cycling club in Halesowen at the age of 10 and gave up a Birmingham University sports science course in 2008 when she was offered a place at British Cycling's Sprint Academy.

As well as competing as part of the Great Britain team, Helen is also an able-bodied tandem cyclist, who from 2011 acted as pilot for Paralympian Aileen McGlynn. They won two medals at the 2012 Paralympic Games.

She teamed up with Sophie Thornhill for the 2014 Commonwealth Games. The pair won gold in the visually impaired tandem sprint when they defeated McGlynn and Louise Haston of Scotland in the final and followed it up with a second gold in the time trial.

She received her award for services to cycling.

Chief to hold talks on refuse tip move

COUNCILLORS from across the political spectrum in Dudley are to hold talks over controversial plans to close Stourbridge tip and move operations to Brierley Hill.

Dudley Council has come under fire from some residents, particularly in Stourbridge and Halesowen, over the plans.

It is not certain that council bosses would get the green light for the tip move as the controlling Labour group no longer has a majority at the council house.

Impact

Concerns had been raised about extra traffic being added to the roads around Brierley Hill with a knock-on impact to the Merry Hill Shopping Centre as a result.

Environment boss Councillor Hilary Bills said she would hold talks with opposition councillors in May.

Bank closes branch over safety fears after series of raids

RBS has closed its main branch in Dudley town centre over fears for the safety of staff and customers after three armed robberies.

The Royal Bank of Scotland branch was closed temporarily in February after robbers struck, but bosses have now confirmed it will not reopen.

Dudley North MP Ian Austin is urging the bank's bosses to reconsider.

A spokesman for RBS said: "The safety and security of our customers and staff are of utmost importance to us and unfortunately there have been a number of incidents over the

last few months, including three raids, which has resulted in this being compromised. Due to the recent security incidents, we have taken the difficult decision to keep the branch closed on a permanent basis.

Knife

"Please be assured that this is a decision we have not come to lightly, but we feel we have no alternative."

The bank closed following a robbery on February 3 when a man threatened staff with a knife and stole cash. Following that incident the bank said it was 'reviewing' security measures.

The spokesman added: "RBS will

ensure there are a range of alternatives for people in the area to continue banking with us."

Mr Austin said: "We can't afford to lose another business on the High Street so I've asked RBS to look at it again. Of course the safety of their staff must be paramount but I want to know whether there are security improvements they could make."

Three armed robberies took place at the bank over the space of five months on October 5, January 3 and February 3. A 47-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of robbery following the February 3 incident.

Staff will move to other branches.



Dudley North MP Ian Austin

Petition sparks leisure debate

A PETITION with more than 4,400 signatures opposing closure of three leisure centres across Dudley borough will be debated by councillors.

Dudley Council wants to demolish Halesowen Leisure Centre, Dudley Leisure Centre and Crystal Leisure Centre in Stourbridge, and replace them with two new centres, probably in Lye and near Dudley town centre. The council says it will save money.

Save Our Leisure Centres organiser, former councillor Tracy Wood, has been invited to speak at the meeting on April 10, at 6pm.

She said: "It's the future of our three leisure centres and, whilst I am happy to speak on behalf of the group, I want to ensure in the three minutes I have, every important point is put forward to persuade the council to keep the centres."

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Weighing in as new stars of the showroom

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



PEOPLE collect all kinds of things to use as decorative objects that were originally designed for practical use – amongst them the humble paperweight.

Paperweights of all shapes, sizes and designs are collected all over the world and have been for many years, famous collectors in years gone by including Oscar Wilde, Truman Capote and Farouk, King of Egypt!

Collectors travel far and wide to attend conventions and to buy their favourite paperweights but this week I thought we'd take a look at some made fairly close to home on the Isle of Wight.

The Isle of Wight Studio Glass company was founded back in 1973 by Michael Harris and his wife Elizabeth. Michael, a former Royal College of Art tutor specialising in hot glass design, ran a glass design company in Malta before setting up his own studio.

The studio quickly became a huge success and continued to flourish, with Michael's two sons taking over the business after his death in 1994.



Jonathan Harris went on to found Jonathan Harris Glass even closer to home, in Ironbridge, in 1999 whilst Timothy Harris continued to run the Isle of Wight studio.

And then in 2012 Michael Harris's brother joined forces with Timothy to launch a new company Isle of Wight Studio Glass Studio Glass (2013) Ltd.

The company prides itself on its continuing innovative design and manufacture techniques and there is no doubt Isle of Wight paperweights produced today are the collectables of the future.

The vintage ones, however, can command some excellent prices in the saleroom and they are really lovely pieces.

Sought-after designs range from the popular apple and mushroom shapes to hearts and eggs, even birds – and prices are very reasonable considering how beautifully-crafted these items are.

Look out for the distinctive maker labels to ensure paperweights are genuinely Isle of Wight and, as always with glass pieces, check carefully for cracks or chips before you buy.

- Perry and Phillips hold valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm.
- The next Perry and Phillips sale of antiques and collectables takes place at the Mill Street saleroom in Low Town, Bridgnorth, this Tuesday, April 4. Viewing will be during the weekend and on Monday and also from 10am on auction day. New sale bidders are advised to attend the saleroom early on auction day to register and be allocated a bidding number.
- Perry and Phillips hold sales on the first Tuesday of every other month.

Hat's the way to do it to complete your look



Known for his hat – Jack Sparrow

MY son always arrives wearing a hat, he has loved them his whole life.

As a child he sported his football beanie or baseball cap and it was a struggle to drag them from his head in recognition of politeness when we sat in a restaurant.

Mainly worn as a protection against the elements but also for ceremonial reasons, occupation and safety, they were originally worn to denote rank or social status.

A hat maker is called a "milliner" from the Italian city Milan where the best quality hats were made in the 18th century. Felt hat makers even have a patron saint, St Clement, who is said to have discovered wool felt.

A bronze age man, whose body was found frozen, was wearing a bearskin cap with a chin strap, he had been buried around 3300BC and a tomb painting from 3200BC shows a man in a conical hat.

The Greeks were the first to wear a hat with a brim and structured hats for women started to be worn in the 16th century. It was unusual for people in the 18th century to be seen out without a hat.

People are known by their hats, the artful

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



doggers top hat, Winston Churchills homburg, Tommy Coopers fez or Captain Jack Sparrow's pirate tricorne. Then there is the rituals connected with them, doffing your hat or launching your mortar board.

It is not that long ago that our policemen and ambulance drivers would not be seen without a structured cap with a shiny badge, our military personnel with their berets and hats, bakers, butchers, and nurses as part of their uniform.

They defined the wearers status, when did we stop wearing them?

Today the hard hat is the most seen safety headgear, but consider the crash helmet and bike helmet, affected by the newest trends and where the newest technology protects the wearer.

Extravagant hats have made a revival and

have been described as "wearable sculpture" the designers creating some incredibly unusual head pieces. Have a look at philipptreacy.co.uk or davidshilling.com, two of our most artistic milliners with amazing works of art.

Some of the most elaborate creations are worn at places such as the Royal Ascot races or by celebrities as publicity stunts and the popularity of dramatic headpieces, fascinators and hatinators (a combination of hat and fascinator) for weddings have increased every year.

This summer caps will be the popular headgear for men, see the range on asos.com or topman.com, a vast choice of colours and fabrics.

Ladies will be wearing large floppy brims, fedoras and caps see newlook.com and riverisland.com. Any outfit is improved by its accessories and hats complete the look.

This summer protect yourself from the sun, and look incredibly stylish, bring back the hat!

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Alexandra Felstead has embraced maternity fashion



Closet Multi Gathered Skirt and Collar Dress



The Oliver Bonas Erika Cold Shoulder Top and Fern Midi Skirt

Clashing colours is the way to brighten wardrobe



Victoria Beckham champions red and blue

WHAT colour clothing are you wearing right now?

If the answer is black, blue or grey, you're in good company, as 23 per cent of Brits are most likely to wear monochrome on a daily basis.

The survey by Currys PC World also found 16 per cent of us avoid vivid hues because we're scared of standing out.

Well, it's time to face those fears, because this season is all about brights – and not just one shade either. "Conscious clashing" brings together two unexpected shades that shouldn't really work – but totally do. These are the pigment pairings to shake up your spring wardrobe...

TOMATO RED AND BLUE

Scarlet and nautical navy have made a chic match for centuries, but the modern take on this twosome involves zingy orange-red and duck egg blue.

It's a combo Victoria Beckham has championed (both on the catwalk and in her own wardrobe), so who are we to argue?

Take your cue from VB and let the red dominate, adding a splash of cerulean with accessories, or a long-sleeved top worn under a dress.

: Closet Multi Gathered Skirt and Collar Dress, £70 (shoes, stylist's own; www.closetlondon.com)

Report by Katie Wright

:: SimplyBe Lovedrobe Frilled Sleeve Red Jumpsuit, £55 (www.simplybe.co.uk)

:: Zara Electric Blue Satin High Heel Shoes with Straps, £29.99 (www.zara.com)

PINK AND NAVY

Pink has been declared the colour of SS17, but what to wear it with?

Mix things up by styling sporty bubblegum pink separates with more refined pieces in deepest navy – a hoodie with tailored trousers, for instance, or a deconstructed shirt with a slouchy midi skirt.

:: Oliver Bonas Erika Cold Shoulder Top, £45; Fern Midi Skirt, £65 (available in April; www.oliverbonas.com)

:: Topshop Pink Oversize Hoodie, £26 (www.topshop.com)

:: Dorothy Perkins Pink Stripe Button Bardot Top, currently reduced to £18.70 from £22 (www.dorothyperkins.com)

MUSTARD AND COBALT

Some shades that sit on opposite sides of the colour wheel should remain apart (red and green, for example), but mustard and cobalt can look amazing together.

This is one of those combinations that works beautifully when it's split 50/50 – a boxy shirt tucked into high-waisted trousers is grown-up and gorgeous, whichever way you choose to top and tail it.

:: Sosandar Mando Cold Shoulder Blouse, £49; Bright Blue Crop Wide Leg Split Trousers, £49 (www.sosandar.com)

:: M&Co Bluebell Pleat Front Blouse, currently reduced to £16 from £26 (www.mandco.com)

PURPLE AND YELLOW

Another case of opposites attracting in a major way, mixing yellow and purple may seem challenging (to say the least), but give it a go and you might be surprised.

The key to finding the right balance is to stick with either sugary shades (think lemon and parma violet), or deeper tones like sunflower and orchid.

:: New Look Yellow Floral Print Cold Shoulder Midi Slip Dress, £27.99; Lilac Ankle Strap Pointed Court Shoes, £19.99 (www.newlook.com)

:: Dorothy Perkins Ochre Collar Sleeveless Shirt, currently reduced to £14.40 from £18 (www.dorothyperkins.com)

GET THE LOOK

Her pregnancy may have come as a bit of a shock, but Made In Chelsea's Binky Felstead has embraced maternity fashion, with a string of stylish red carpet appearances – and it's not all posh designer clobber either. At the 2017 Television And Radio Industries Club Awards, the 26-year-old wrapped her bump in a burgundy Bardot dress that's just £12 from Boohoo.

Unique US band's hypnotic grooves

Warpaint
O2 Institute, Birmingham
 ON a day of bad news and dismal weather, American indie rock band Warpaint provided an antidote with their hypnotic grooves and slinky rhythms.

The California-based quartet are built upon the firm foundations of harmonising vocals from guitarists Emily Kokal and Theresa Wayman, and the propulsive rhythm section of bassist Jenny Lee Lindberg and Aussie drummer Stella Mozgawa.

They have released three albums over six years, forging a distinctive sound that has brought them a loyal following.

It ensured a full house at the ornate Digbeth venue as the dream pop four aptly began with Intro from their eponymous second album.

The band is obviously a tight-knit unit, which is vital for their undulating, free-flowing funky sound, invigorated by sharp bursts of caustic guitar.

Each band member seems to have their own portion of the fans' adulation but for me it was Emily Kokal who really stepped up to the frontwoman role, holding the attention as she weaved around the stage in a dreamy reverie.

Highlights of their 85-minute set included fans' favourites Undertow and Love Is To Die, the hazy Above Control, the driven pop nugget New Song from latest album Heads Up and hard-hitting finale Disco//Very.



Olly Murs in action at the Genting Arena on Friday night, one of three consecutive NEC gigs

Fans delight at Arena with Dear Darlin' Olly

Olly Murs, Genting Arena, NEC
 CHARISMATIC Essex boy Olly Murs showed why he is British pop's no1 star with a high-energy two-hour show on the second of his three night stint at the NEC's mega-venue.

The 32-year-old singer whipped up the 90 per cent female audience by announcing that he was 'feeling frisky' and, to roars of delight, was in bum wiggling form.

Looking dapper in a dark suit, he kicked off his concert with one of his more recent hits, You Don't Know Love, from last year's 24 Hrs album which gives the tour its title. Then came the 'Up' hits, Wrapped Up, Grow Up and Up, that latter with one of his backing singers standing in for Demi Lovato on the country-tinged pop gem.

It soon became apparent Olly wears his adulation lightly with lots of self-deprecating banter between songs. Unlike some of his contemporaries is was clear that he was singing every single note (yes, we mean Bieber), even when strutting the T-shaped catwalk in front of the stage and throwing down some nifty dance moves, often joined by his posse of four backing singers.

He varied the pace with some heartfelt ballads, including Flaws and I Need You Now, and encouraged an audience singalong when he merged his song Back Around with a version of Tina Turner's What's Love Got To Do With It. He also got them to sing part of Take That song Never Forget to feature

GIG REVIEWS

by Leon Burakowski

on the weekend's Saturday Night Takeaway TV show.

The gig went up a gear with his funky pop chart-topper Heart Skips A Beat and, probably his most enduring and memorable song, Dear Darlin'.

Then the pop star/TV presenter urged his fans to put their phones away and dance, dance, dance to a ten minute mash-up of dancefloor classics which also showed the prowess of his seven-piece band. The medley included Olly's versions of That's The Way I Like It, Never Too Much, She's Got That Vibe, Jump Around and U Can't Touch This, as the irrepressible entertainer went on a romp around the arena, high-fiving fans before making it back to the stage for a solid version of Justin Timberlake's Can't Stop The Feeling.

The spectacular concert, which came complete with fireworks, clouds of dry ice, laser beams and giant screens, came to a crescendo with his biggest hits, Troublemaker and Dance With Me Tonight, before a satisfying encore of Kiss Me and, after thanking his fans for 'getting me out of the call centre', he dedicated final song Years & Years to his audience. Nice one Olly.

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Sex symbol? I just wanted to be Elvis

Punk pioneer Suzi Quatro has long been celebrated for paving the way for women in rock, with a no-nonsense attitude and kickass lyrics to match.

But surprisingly, looking back, Suzi had no idea there were even barriers to break down – and never considered herself as 'gendered'; wanting, as a child, to grow up to be Elvis Presley.

"I can't say that I knew that was what was happening, but I will say that all this time, all I was ever doing I was being myself," said Suzi, now aged 66.

"I've never been a gendered person. I saw Elvis when I was six-years-old on TV and thought 'that's going to be me'. It didn't even occur to me that he was a guy.

"I've talked to guys about this. I think it had to be somebody like me to pave the way.

"I kicked that door open, but I'd never had a female role model.

"Not that I realised what I was doing back then. I'd been in bands since I was 14.

"I wasn't even aware there was a 'door'."

Suzi, who achieved great success with hits such as Can The Can and 48 Crash, says that despite the difficult time in which her career began in the early seventies, she also never encountered any significant sexism or stereotyping – despite the issues which reportedly remain in the industry today.

"I always took myself seriously. What you give out, you get back," adds Suzi.

"I was a serious bass player. Don't mess with me – that was the vibe I gave out.

"You know, you just can't teach this to people. I can be one of the guys, up to a point – but there's a line.

"If men step over that line, they only do it once.

"I had some issues in the very, very early days when playing clubs with the bands. They wanted us to wear mini skirts because we were girls. Not that I minded wearing skirts, I just didn't like being dictated to.

"I came from a family of four girls – and we're all ballsy ladies.

"I'm the kind of person who believes everyone should shine their light. Gender simply shouldn't come into it.

"If you want to stay at home and be a housewife, and that will make you happy, then do it. Be who you are."

Despite always carrying a very sexy image, Suzi rarely bared any skin – and, as such, takes a dim view of female stars feeling the need to expose themselves to obtain fame and recognition.

"I think people like Cher and Madonna were true to themselves at the time," says Suzi.

"But nowadays, a lot of women stars are basically naked on stage. They think they're running the show and that they're in control, but they're not.

"I had a sexy image, but I was never up there exposing anything.

"I'm really hoping it will turn around again soon. It's not what I fought for."

The star will perform at the Genting Arena on October 14, on the Legends Live tour – accompanied by Hot Chocolate, The Osmonds and David Essex.

"I'm touring with David Essex – we used to see each other at every Top Of The Pops. I'm really pleased to be headlining this tour with people I know. We all started off in the same era.

"I'm going to get a few poker games going, I tell you.

"I can't say I know The Osmonds as well though.

"Errol Brown, meanwhile, was good friend. I loved him truly. Before I'd made it, I was at his

Smoulder – but Suzi's never exposed much flesh



house and asked if he could lend me £5.

"For 35 years, every time I saw him after that, he'd say 'don't you pay me back, that was a lucky £5'. He was such a lovely man.

"The show will pretty much be made up of all the hits – that's what the fans will be there for."

Suzi, who previously had a show on ITV called Gas Street, has had plenty of experience in Birmingham, having filmed the programme there.

"I like it very much. There's a nice big shopping centre there, which I'll certainly be visiting. I'm a mallaholic any way," laughs Suzi.

"I'll be sure to have an Indian meal while I'm in Birmingham too. It has to be done. Indian food isn't big in the US like it is here, but I love it."

In recent years, Suzi has worked on other projects – forming a supergroup called QSP with Bilston-born Don Powell from Slade and Andy Scott from The Sweet.

She also released a poetry book in 2014 named Through My Eyes and was named Doctor Of Music last October by Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge.

"I don't even have a high school diploma, so I was absolutely thrilled," adds Suzi.

"I have got a bucket list. And I'm very proud of the poetry I've released.

"I've also formed a new band called QSP. The album's come out in Australia and it's already at number 23 in their charts.

"I'd really like to make a film of my life next.

"I'm currently part way through writing a novel. I used a rock and roll girl as the lead character, but it's

I believe everyone should shine their light. Gender simply shouldn't come into it.

not me. In fact, as the story goes on, the characters seem to have minds of their own.

"And I've still got my Quatrophonic show on Radio Two. I'm a busy girl."

If given the opportunity to duet with anyone from history, Suzi says her top choices would include Elvis and Otis Redding. Modern day stars she'd like to work with, meanwhile, include Melissa Etheridge, Tom Petty or KT Tunstall.

"I'm also a huge fan of Bob Dylan," adds Suzi.

"I'd give both arms and legs to work with him.

"If I could meet anyone from throughout history, I would love to meet Jesus. He must have been the most charismatic of people.

"He'd be a good dinner partner too – you'd never have to buy wine."

More than 45 years after she launched her solo career, Suzi says the greatest thrill is still performing live.

"I really love my fans. It's a huge thrill every show when I see everyone walking away with a smile on their faces – and I can think, 'I did that'. If that happens, I really am a happy girl," she adds.

"You can't buy that feeling for all the money in the world.

"It's just who I am, I'm a born entertainer."

Kirsten Rawlins

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Temples back with a new album



Temples are evolving a unique new style of baroque and roll

It doesn't take too long with Temples' second album *Volcano* to realise that a noticeable evolution has taken place, whilst the psychedelic pop band from Northamptonshire have kept intact the things fans loved about their debut, *Sun Structures*.

Corkscrew-haired singer James Bagshaw says it's all part of learning their craft and the sonic possibilities. He explains: "If there's a sense of scale, it was really just a result of implementing a load of things that we didn't know about the first time around."

Referring back to *Sun Structures*, a record that was recorded in his house in his native Kettering, James explains: "We didn't even

have a subwoofer to listen back to things that we did on *Sun Structures*."

Co-founding member and bassist Thomas Warmley says: "We discovered a lot as we went along and the excitement at having done so radiates outwards."

It's a point emphatically born out by the track *Mystery Of Pop* where Sam Toms' brittle, pilledriving rhythm clears the path for breathless baroque pop where synth and mellotron interweave to beguiling effect.

Oh My Saviour was written in Japan, where Temples enjoy an enormous following, at the foot of Mount Fuji, near the site of the eponymous rock festival where they played. "That's when the album began in earnest for me," says James.

Temples are back in Birmingham, at the O2 Institute on Sunday, for their first gig in the city since their debut on the NME Tour exactly three years ago.

The band's confident approach must in part be a result of the critical acclaim *Sun Structures* received. Songs such as *Keep In The Dark*, *Shelter Song* and *Mesmerise* have dispersed into the collective consciousness. Among the converts were Johnny Marr and Noel Gallagher. By the end of 2014, *Sun Structures* had charted in 18 countries and become the year's biggest-selling vinyl album in independent British record shops.

This time around is that it's harder to spot the influences. This is the sound of a band squaring up to their potential.

From Russia with love of dance and banter

Strictly Come Dancing star Pasha Kovalev brings his new show *Let's Dance the Night Away* to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre on Sunday (April 9), a show charting Pasha's life from Russia to Strictly stardom.

"Let's Dance the Night Away is a very personal show, because you will see my story of becoming a dancer, travelling the world with my dance career and following my dream," says the 37-year-old professional dancer and Strictly champion, who is originally from Siberia.

"It has been a long journey. I started dancing in Russia, moved to America, travelled the world and ended up here in the UK. Now I'm doing the best job ever!"

He describes *Let's Dance the Night Away*

as 'a full-on show, packed with incredible dancing, fun and adventure'.

"There will be lots of dancing, lots of sequins and beautiful costumes, beautiful lights and amazing music. There are lots of surprises too. We will have audience participation, so some lucky people can jump on stage and show me what they've got."

"I think the number that everyone will like is a paso doble. It's very dramatic. There's also singing... well I'm not going to be singing but we have professional singers who will do that! Everyone in the audience will find something that they like."

Audience interaction is a key part to the tour, Pasha will be holding a Q&A session before his show. "That's my favourite thing to do - interact with the audience. Usually in my show there's a little bit of banter, fun and jokes and a lot of dancing."

We are running lots of promotions and

competitions to win tickets to the Q&A sessions on my Twitter @PashaKovalev."

Pasha will be joined by Wolverhampton dance school, Linzi G School of Dance in both halves of the show.

"I will actually be doing one of the dances with the dance school. I started dancing when I was eight years old. I remember every single time we had a proper performance in front of a proper audience. You grow, you become better, you polish your skills. That's what I'm hoping the performance will do for youngsters at my show."

Pasha will also be joined by his professional dance partner Anya Garnis. "Anya and I have been dancing together for almost two decades and this is actually the story of both of us," he adds.

Tickets are available from www.grandtheatre.co.uk or on 01902 429212.

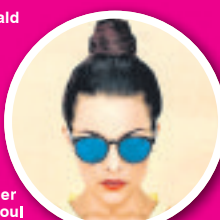


Caro's comeback with Emerald Isle dates

Retro-styled Dutch singer Caro Emerald brings her *Emerald Isle* Tour to Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Saturday and Sunday nights.

The 35-year-old pop-jazz songstress from Amsterdam enjoyed Euro-wide success with her albums *Deleted Scenes from the Cutting Room Floor* and *The Shocking Miss Emerald*.

Walsall's Jorja Smith has sold out her gig on Saturday at the O2 Academy; soul man Billy Ocean at the Symphony Hall on Monday; London Grammar play Birmingham Town Hall on Tuesday; US R&B singer producer Ne-Yo has his rescheduled concert at the O2 Academy on Thursday (6) with Afrobeat star Diamond Platnumz.



See the funny side as play goes very wrong

A West End hit that won the Best New Comedy accolade at the 2015 Laurence Olivier Awards is coming to Wolverhampton Grand Theatre next week.

The Play That Goes Wrong joins 'The Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society' as they put on a 1920s murder mystery. It becomes apparent the accident-prone thespians face a battle against the odds to reach their final curtain. The farce will be staged at the Lichfield Street theatre from Monday to Saturday, April 8. Mod musical *All Or Nothing*, with songs of The Small Faces, is at the New Alexandra Theatre Tuesday to Saturday.



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Mon 10 Apr	5 Rhine & Moselle Inclusive £249
Sun 16 Apr	7 Italian Riviera Inclusive £379
Sun 16 Apr	7 Scenic Black Forest Inclusive £349
Mon 17 Apr	4 Disneyland Spectacular at The Kyriad £319
Mon 17 Apr	5 Ostend Inclusive & Paddle Steam £259
Mon 17 Apr	5 Rhine & Moselle Inclusive £259
Mon 17 Apr	5 Rhine Valley Superdole £199
Fri 21 Apr	4 Ostend Inclusive Weekend £199
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Sun 23 Apr	7 Ostend Special Inclusive £359
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Sat 3 Jun	Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funline £89
Sat 10 Jun	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour £119
Sat 10 Jun	Islands at Chester Zoo & Llangollen Cruise £99
Sat 17 Jun	Polar Bears, Penguins & Kingdom of Ice £119
Sat 24 Jun	Legoland Spectacular £99
Sat 24 Jun	Longleat Safari Park, Jungle Cruise & Windsor £99
Sat 1 Jul	Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funline £89
Sat 15 Jul	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour £129

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NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

CHOICE



Emma Willis

The Voice UK (ITV, 8.30pm)
This year's contest draws to a close as the four finalists take to the stage in the first part of the two-part climax. Having progressed through seven weeks of blind auditions, two battle rounds, four live knockout stages and the ever-tense quarter- and semi-finals, the would-be stars face the ultimate test of their vocal abilities, with the winner earning themselves a prestigious contract with Polydor Records. Superstar coaches Will.i.am, Tom Jones, Jennifer Hudson and Gavin Rossdale are on hand to share their thoughts as each performer steps down from the stage, with one of them being eliminated from the contest before the last programme of the series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 10.00 Saturday Kitchen Live. 11.30 Mary Berry Everyday. (R) 12.00 Football Focus. 1.00 BBC News: Weather. 1.15 Bargain Hunt. 2.15 Escape to the Country. (R) 3.15 Money for Nothing. (R) 4.00 Final Score. 5.15 Film: Madagascar. (2005) Animated comedy, with the voice of Ben Stiller.
6.35 BBC News.
6.45 Regional Programme.
6.50 Pointless Celebrities. Alexander Armstrong and Richard Osman present a medical version of the celebrity quiz, with contestants Guy Henry, Rosie Marcel, Vicki Pepperdine, Ricky Grover, Raji Singh, Hilary Jones, Charles Dale and Amanda Henderson trying to come up with the least likely correct answers to a series of questions posed to members of the public.
7.40 Who Dares Wins. Game show in which two pairs of complete strangers team up, each battling to outdo the other by listing as much as they know about a given subject.
8.25 Casualty. Alicia wakes up in Sam's bed, while Iain and Gem's relationship is tested when they spend the day together on the rig and Iain is confronted with his biggest fear. Evie is confronted at home by a masked intruder who attacks her and ransacks the property, and when Evie manages to escape, she is hit outside by Susie's car.
9.15 All Round to Mrs Brown's. Mrs Brown's Boys creator, writer and star Brendan O'Carroll dons Agnes's famous cardigan and curlers once again, throwing open the doors of the larger-than-life Irish matriarch's home to host a Saturday night chat show, filmed in front of a live studio audience. Inviting friends, family and special guests to join her in the sitting room, Mrs Brown stages mischievous stunts, and gives a few celebrity visitors a piece of her mind.
10.15 BBC News: Weather; National Lottery Update.
10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Liverpool v Everton.
12.00 Film: Jagged Edge. (1985) 1.45 Weather for the Week Ahead. 1.50 BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) 7.00 Film: Beautiful But Dangerous. (1954) 8.25 Film: We Dive at Dawn. (1943) 10.00 Natural World. (R) 11.00 Homes Under the Hammer. (R) 12.00 Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well. (R) 12.30 Haiky Bikers' Best of British. (R) 1.15 Film: Gypsy. (1962) Musical, starring Rosalind Russell and Natalie Wood. 3.30 Natural World. (R) 4.30 University Challenge. (R) 5.00 Only Connect. (R) 5.30 Flog It! (R)
6.30 Gardeners' World. Monty Don begins a brand new project when he starts a new soft fruit garden, and also plants new potatoes and divides herbaceous plants in the jewel garden. Including weather. (R)
7.00 Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby. Giles Coren and Monica Galetti join the staff working in some of the most extraordinary hotels around the world, beginning with Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, which employs 9,500 people and caters for a million guests a year. Their duties include acting as attendants at the world's largest infinity pool, working as a butler under a former special forces officer, and joining a catering team that provides Brazilian, Chinese, French and Japanese cuisine for 60 restaurants. (R)
8.00 Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands. Paul Merton visits the once-inhabited island of Heiseir, sails around the gannet haven of Sula Sgeir and endures rough seas to make landfall on North Rona. Last in the series.
8.30 Dad's Army. The men of Walmington-on-Sea's Home Guard use up all their ammunition shooting at a passing aircraft, so Captain Mainwaring has to hold a court of inquiry. (R)
9.00 Oil XL. Stephen Fry invites David Mitchell, Sue Perkins and Sami Shah to join regular panellist Alan Davies as he meanders about some places that start with the letter M.
9.45 Film: Jimi: All Is By My Side. (2013) Premiere. Biopic of Jimi Hendrix following the events of 1966, when he left New York to spend a year living in London.
11.35 Film: Populaire. (2012) Comedy, starring Deborah Francois and Romain Duris.
1.20 This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knockers Street. 6.10 Bottom Knockers Street. (R) 6.25 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) 6.45 Sooty. (R) 6.55 Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) 7.00 Outdoors. (R) 7.05 Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) 7.30 Scrambled!: Scrambled! 7.35 Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) 7.50 Scrambled!: NinjaGo: Masters of Spinjitzu. (R) 8.20 Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) 8.45 Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! 9.05 Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) 9.25 Alphabetical. (R) 10.20 James Martin's French Adventure. (R) 11.20 Best Walks with a View with Julia Bradbury. (R) 11.50 ITV News: Weather. 12.00 Rebound. (R) 12.55 Film: Beethoven's 2nd. (1993) Comedy sequel, starring Charles Grodin. 2.40 Film: Superman. (1978) Comic-strip adventure, starring Christopher Reeve. 5.30 Regional Programme. 5.45 ITV News.

6.00 You've Been Framed! Let Loose! Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring everything from cute kids and crazy animals to pranks and painful-looking accidents.

7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. Dermot O'Leary joins the duo on tonight's show for an edition of I'm a Celebrity Get Out of Me! Ear! Plus, Ant and Dec take a journey through time back to the 1980s.

8.30 The Voice UK. This year's contest concludes with a two-part finale as four acts face the ultimate test of their vocal abilities, with only three going through to the last stage.

10.20 ITV News: Weather.

10.35 Lethal Weapon. A man wrecks a jewellery store and puts a security guard in hospital. Murtaugh delves deep into the psyche of the suspect, a former Navy Seal once treated for post-traumatic stress disorder, and draws parallels between him and his partner Riggs, who also once served in the military. Although Riggs' association with the suspect threatens to interfere with the case, it also forces him to open up to his colleague about the experiences that have shaped him. Clayne Crawford, Damon Wayans and Dante Brown star. (R)

11.35 The Chase. (R)

12.30 Jackpot247. 3.00 Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) 3.50 ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.05 Triathlon: Challenge Wanaka. 6.30 The King of Queens. (R) 6.55 The King of Queens. (R) 7.20 The King of Queens. (R) 7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.10 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) 8.35 Frasier. (R) 9.05 Frasier. (R) 9.40 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 10.05 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 10.30 The Big Bang Theory. (R) 11.00 The Simpsons. (R) 11.30 The Simpsons. (R) 12.00 The Simpsons. (R) 12.30 Extreme Food. 1.00 Come Dine with Me. (R) 1.30 Come Dine with Me. (R) 2.00 Come Dine with Me. (R) 2.30 Come Dine with Me. (R) 3.00 Come Dine with Me. (R) 3.30 A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) 4.35 Location, Location, Location. (R) 5.35 Grand Designs. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Film: Titanic. (1997) A party of explorers studying the sunken remains of the famous liner meets an elderly woman who was a passenger on the ill-fated maiden voyage. She recounts how she boarded the ship while on the brink of being forced into marriage by her family, and was stopped from killing herself by a penniless artist. She fell in love with her saviour, but the disaster on the horizon meant their time together was doomed to be short. James Cameron's Oscar-winning romantic drama, starring Kate Winslet, Leonardo DiCaprio, Billy Zane, Kathy Bates and Bill Paxton.

10.45 Film: Colombiana. (2011) An orphan grows up to be an assassin while secretly plotting revenge on the gangsters who murdered her parents. Action thriller, starring Zoe Saldana and Cliff Curtis.

12.45 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. Part two of two. Mill Street Bistro proprietor Joe Nagy slips back into his old ways and picks petty fights with Gordon Ramsay as the chef tries to give him advice. (R) 1.35 Our Guy in China. Guy Martin concludes his adventure by taking on his toughest physical challenge yet as he attempts the fastest crossing of the Taklamakan Desert on a bicycle. (R) 2.30 Holyoaks. Omnibus. It is the day of Amy and Ryan's wedding, but Ryan has also got their potential move to America playing on his mind, while Scott is having a fashion crisis. 4.35 Phil Spencer. Secret Agent. Featuring retired couple Lenny and Mary in Reigate, Surrey, who want to sell up and return to their Irish roots, but their home's dated decor is preventing them securing a sale. (R) 5.30 Fifteen to One. General knowledge quiz. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! 10.05 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. 10.40 Access. 10.50 Police Interceptors Unleashed. 11.20 Police Interceptors. (R) 12.20 On Benefits: Life on the Dole. (R) 1.20 On Benefits: Life on the Dole. (R) 2.20 15 Kids & Claiming Benefits. (R) 3.20 Nightmare Tenants. Slum Landlords. (R) 4.15 Nightmare Tenants. Slum Landlords. (R) 5.15 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)
6.10 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. The officers chase a debt of almost £2,000 on unpaid parking fines, and later encounter the extraordinary case of a debt of £80,000 owed by a hotel owner to his ex-girlfriend. However, as they begin to search the property, they call upon police back-up as the agents fear the debtor may have access to firearms. Elsewhere, two officers head to a car garage in Manchester where the owner owes £2,000 after losing a court case over a faulty vehicle. (R)

7.10 NCIS: Los Angeles. The team investigates when two pharmaceutical executives are murdered, uncovering a criminal who changes his identity for each offence he commits.

8.00 NCIS. A deep-sea diver is murdered on the job, and the team must identify which of his co-workers is the killer, before they are released from a four-day stint in a decompression chamber.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Barnsley v Sheffield Wednesday at Oakwell and Newcastle United v Wigan Athletic at St James' Park. Plus, the best of the action from Reading v Leeds United at the Madejski Stadium and Huddersfield Town v Burton Albion at the John Smith's Stadium.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce all the goals from the latest games in Leagues One and Two, including Bolton Wanderers v Chesterfield.

10.30 FIA Formula E Live: Mexico. The Mexico City ePrix. Coverage of the fourth round of the campaign from the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez in Mexico.

12.15 SuperCasino. 3.10 Film: Blood Creek. (2009) 4.45 House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 The Silk Road 8.00 Woolly Mammoth: Secrets from the Ice 9.00 Follow the Money 11.00 Top of the Pops: 1983 12.15 Classic Albums: The Beach Boys - Pet Sounds 1.15 The Joy of the Guitar Riff 2.15 The Kinks at the BBC 3.15 Sounds of the Eighties 3.40 Close
ITV2
11.35 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway 1.10 Britain's Got Talent: Top 10 Child Stars 2.15 Film: Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) 3.15 FYI Daily 3.20 Film: Cats & Dogs: The Revenge of Kitty Galore (2010) 4.00 Mr Bean 5.05 Film: Evan Almighty (2007) 6.05 FYI Daily 6.10 Film: Evan Almighty (2007) 7.00 Scorpion 8.00 Film: The Mask (1994) 9.00 FYI Daily 9.05 Film: The Mask (1994) 10.05 Family Guy 10.30 Celebrity Juice 11.15 Family Guy 12.10 American Dad! 1.10 Film: Hall Pass (2011) 3.00 Teleshopping
ITV3
11.25 Film: The Baby and the Battleship (1956) 12.25 FYI Daily 12.30 Film: The Baby and the Battleship (1956) 1.30 Heidi 3.35 Rosemary & Thyme 4.40 Inspector Morse 7.00 Endeavour 9.00 Lewis 11.00 Les Dawson Forever 12.00 Colditz 2.05 ITV3 Nightscreen 2.30 Teleshopping
ITV4
11.00 The Big Fish Off 12.00 Fishing Impossible 1.00 Pawn Stars 1.30 ITV Racing: Live from Doncaster and Kempton Park. Coverage of today's race meetings. 4.00 Film: The Horse Soldiers (1959) 5.00 FYI Daily 5.05 Film: The Horse Soldiers (1959) 6.25 It's Not Rocket Science 7.25 Fierce 8.30 Film: Cannonball Run II (1984) 9.30 FYI Daily 9.35 Film: Cannonball Run II (1984) 10.40 Film: The Last Boy Scout (1991) 11.40 FYI Daily 11.45 Film: The Last Boy Scout (1991) 12.55 The Motorsport Mavericks 1.55 Fittin Gear 2.45 ITV4 Nightscreen 3.00 Teleshopping
E4
4.00 The Big Bang Theory 6.30 Film: Iron Man 2 (2010) 9.00 Film: The Transporter (2002) 10.50 Gogglebox 12.55 Rude Tube 2.00 Naked Attraction 2.55 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD 3.40 Melissa & Joey 4.25 Revenge
Film4
1.00 Catch That Kid (2004) 2.45 Carry On Cleo (1964) 4.35 Rango (2011) 6.45 Runaway Bride (1999) 9.00 The Wolf of Wall Street (2013) 12.30 A Field in England (2013) 2.15 Ben Wheatley Interview Special 2.25 Straightheads (2007) 4.00 Close

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CHOICE



Simon Reeve
Turkey with Simon Reeve (BBC2, 9pm)
In the second half of the journey, Simon travels along the Black Sea Coast to the capital of Ankara and the Northern Highlands, witnessing first hand the aftermath of fighting in Kurdish areas and meeting a conservationist attempting to preserve the region's brown bears. He then returns to Istanbul, where he takes part in a popular TV series set in the palace of the Ottoman Sultans.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.25** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.10** Countryfile Spring Diaries. (R) **2.55** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.20** Songs of Praise. **4.00** Rowing: The Boat Races. Live coverage of the men's and women's University Boat Races.
6.25 BBC News.
6.40 Regional Programme.
6.50 **Countryfile**. Reports on the UK's forests. Matt Baker helps out with an inventory of the New Forest's trees, and Ellie Harrison visits Inverness to take a look at industrial timber production and the impact of forestry on red squirrels. Sean Fletcher reports on the Scottish tradition of hutting. John Craven examines the revival of working with horses in forests, and Charlotte Smith discovers whether enough trees are being planted in Britain.
8.00 **Antiques Roadshow**. Fiona Bruce presents the show from Caversham Park, near Reading, home to the BBC's international news monitoring service. Items brought in to be valued include some notes written by a 17th-century Shakespeare fan, a ring connected to a moving story of the California Gold Rush, and watercolour illustrations depicting life in 18th-century India.
9.00 **Line of Duty**. A new DCI is placed in charge of Operation Trapdoor as Roz fails to report for duty. A dismembered body is discovered, and the AC-12 team delves deeper into the case as evidence mounts up that an innocent man has been convicted of crimes he did not commit. Kate makes progress in her undercover role as all the signs point to crucial evidence being covered up by Roz, but the investigation suffers a setback when the team discovers that the main informant, forensics investigator Tim Field, has gone missing.
10.00 BBC News.
10.20 Regional Programme.
10.30 Match of the Day 2.
11.35 I'm Different: Let Me Drive.
12.05 Weather for the Week Ahead.
12.10 BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 An Island Parish. (R) **6.45** The Beechgrove Garden. **7.15** Around the World in 80 Gardens. (R) **8.15** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.45** Countryfile. (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.15** Nigel Slater: Eating Together. (R) **11.45** Simply Nigella. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** World Figure Skating Championships. **3.00** When Danny Won the Masters. **3.30** Holiday of My Lifetime with Len Goodman. (R) **4.00** The House That 1000 Built. (R) **5.00** Flog It. (R) **6.00** **Inside the Factory: Cereal**. Gregg Wallace and Cherry Healey return with the programme shedding light on how some of Britain's biggest factories make the nation's favourite products, beginning with popular breakfast cereals. Gregg starts by receiving a boat-load of corn fresh from Argentina, and witnesses as it is cooked, milled and flavoured to become a top-selling cereal brand. Cherry learns about the immunity-boosting powers of vitamin D, which is added to many of the UK's most popular cereals, and historian Ruth Gordon samples a Victorian breakfast of lobster and pig's head, as part of a daily meal that included 4,500 calories. (R)
7.00 **Robot Wars**. Dara O Briain and Angela Scanlon present the final heat, with reigning champion Apollo taking on rival contenders Ms Nightshade, Coyote, Rusty, Crackers n' Smash, Megamouse, Trolley Rage and Carbide through two group battles and a mini-league. The battles are all overseen by judges Professor Noel Sharkey, Professor Selhu Vijayakumar and Dr Lucy Rogers.
8.00 **Top Gear**. Motoring magazine, featuring test drives of the latest models.
9.00 **Turkey with Simon Reeve**. Part two of two. Simon travels along the Black Sea Coast to the capital of Ankara, and witnesses first hand the aftermath of fighting in Kurdish areas before returning to Istanbul.
10.00 **Live at the Apollo**. Host Joe Lycett introduces Ivo Graham and Phil Wang to the stage before a packed house at London's Hammersmith Apollo. (R)
10.45 **Film: Dead Poets Society**. (1989) Drama, with Robin Williams.
12.50 Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **1.50** Holby City. (R) **2.45** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITY: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Outdoors. (R) **7.05** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **8.20** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.45** Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Countrywise: Guide to Britain. (R) **10.00** Secret Dealers. (R) **11.00** Wild Australia with Ray Mears. (R) **11.30** From Russia with Love. (1963) **2.00** The Voice UK. (R) **3.50** Little Big Shots. (R) **4.55** Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule. (R) **5.30** Regional Programme : Weather. **5.40** ITV News: Weather.
6.00 **Five Gold Rings**. Game show, hosted by Phillip Schofield, in which two friends take on a father and son to answer visual questions by placing rings on an LED floor.
7.00 **The Voice UK**. Conclusion of the two-part final, as we learn which of the three remaining acts will be this year's winner and gain a prestigious contract with Polydor Records. Last in the series.
8.00 **Vera**. The detective is called to the University of Northumberland when Jamie Marshall, a promising young journalism student, falls to his death from the top of a disused faculty building. With no eyewitnesses and no immediate leads, Vera turns to friends and family to glean all she can about Jamie, and to discover who might have wanted him dead. With Brenda Blethyn, Kenny Doughty and Jon Morrison.
10.00 ITV News: Weather.
10.15 **The Nightly Show Best Bits**. Highlights of the fifth week of the entertainment show, with Gordon Ramsay presenting a mix of topical monologues, studio games, celebrity guests, stand-up and video clips.
10.45 **Film: Hard Target**. (1993) An out-of-work merchant sailor investigates sadistic hunters who stalk human prey in New Orleans. John Woo's action thriller, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme.
12.30 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Cube. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.20 The King of Queens. (R) **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** The Simpsons. (R) **1.50** Gogglesprogs. (R) **2.55** Film: Gulliver's Travels. (2010) Fantasy comedy, starring Jack Black. **4.30** Film: Night at the Museum. (2006) Fantasy comedy, starring Ben Stiller.
6.35 **Channel 4 News**.
7.00 **Titanic: The New Evidence**. Investigative journalist and Titanic expert Senan Molony examines recently recovered photographs of the doomed ship, which provide fresh insight into the reasons for its sinking. The images reveal a strange mark on the hull, which may prove previously overlooked stories of a fire raging in the boiler room. This blaze may explain why the captain chose to ignore warnings of icebergs ahead and why the vessel sank so quickly after the fatal collision. (R)
8.00 **Spying on the Royals**. Part one of a two-part documentary examining an espionage operation conducted to gather information on Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson. Shown to mark the 80th anniversary of the king's abdication, the programmes examines recently declassified documents revealing the extent of the surveillance and who ordered it, as well as featuring dramatic reconstructions and eyewitness accounts.
9.00 **Homeland**. Dar plays his hand and Quinn revisits his past. Thriller following a team of CIA agents battling terrorists and problems in their personal lives. Claire Danes stars.
10.05 **Gogglebox**. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)
11.00 **8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown**. Jimmy Carr hosts the hybrid comedy panel quiz show, as guest team captain David Williams joins forces with Jonathan Ross, while Jon Richardson teams up with Joe Lycett. (R)
12.00 **Film: Seven Psychopaths**. (2012) **2.00** The Last Leg. (R) **2.55** Great British Buildings: Restoration of the Year. (R) **3.50** Building the Dream.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.10** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **6.15** Paw Patrol. (R) **6.25** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.40** Fireman Sam. (R) **6.50** Rupert Bear. (R) **7.00** Only the Little White Van. **7.05** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **7.20** Little Princess. (R) **7.30** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.45** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.30** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.45** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.15** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.25** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.35** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.45** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.20** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.05** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.35** The Gadget Show. (R) **12.35** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.35** Film: Operation: Daybreak (1975) **3.50** Film: The Four Feathers. (2002) Historical adventure, starring Heath Ledger.
6.15 **5 News Weekend**.
6.20 **Inside Kensington Palace**. The history of famous buildings, beginning by going behind the scenes of the royal residence, home to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and Prince Harry. (R)
7.05 **Inside Buckingham Palace**. Part two of two. Despite being closed and secretive, the Palace is a symbol of everything British. This edition reflects on previous monarchs' accomplishments during their reign. (R)
8.00 **Disobedient Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud**. Compilation of internet videos featuring dogs doing humorous things.
9.00 **The Michael McIntyre Story**. Documentary about the comedian's rise to fame, examining his breakthrough performance at the 2006 Royal Variety show and role in the reinvention of stand-up comedy on TV.
10.30 **20 Moments That Shocked Comedy**. Countdown of memorable comedy moments, including the launch of The Young Ones and Spitting Image, and the controversy surrounding Monty Python's Life of Brian. (R)
12.00 Football League Tonight: The Checkatrade Trophy. **12.45** Police Interceptors: Take-down. (R) **1.10** SuperCasino. **3.10** Yorkshire: A Year in the Wild. (R) **4.00** Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Dame Vera Lynn: Happy 100th Birthday **8.00** Giselle: Belle of the Ballet **9.00** Do We Really Need the Moon? **10.00** Gravity and Me: The Force that Shapes our Lives **11.30** Sex: A Horizon Guide **12.30** The Story of Maths **1.30** The Century That Wrote Itself **2.30** How to Get Ahead: At Versailles **3.30** Close
ITV2
1.05 2Awesome: Guidance **1.40** 2Awesome: Fame High **1.55** 2Awesome: LA Story **2.10** 2Awesome: Side Effects **2.40** The Hot Desk: Emma Willis **2.50** You've Been Framed! Gold **3.20** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **4.55** Film: The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (2004) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00** Film: The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (2004) **7.15** Film: Liar Liar (1997) **8.15** FYI Daily **8.20** Film: Liar Liar (1997) **9.00** Ibiza Weekender **10.20** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.25** The Cleveland Show **1.20** The Vampire Diaries **2.15** Teleshopping
ITV3
11.30 Heidi **1.45** Agatha Christie's Sparkling Cyanide **3.50** Agatha Christie's Marple **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs **9.00** Les Dawson: An Audience With That Never Was **10.00** Les Dawson Forever **11.05** Film: Steptoe and Son Ride Again (1973) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10** Film: Steptoe and Son Ride Again (1973) **1.10** Agatha Christie's Sparkling Cyanide **2.50** May the Best House Win **4.35** On the Buses **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen
ITV4
7.15 The Big Fish Off **8.15** Film: Jackie Chan's First Strike (1996) **9.15** FYI Daily **9.20** Film: Jackie Chan's First Strike (1996) **10.00** Film: First Blood (1982) **11.05** FYI Daily **11.05** Film: First Blood (1982) **11.55** Film: Cliffhanger (1993) **12.55** FYI Daily **1.00** Film: Cliffhanger (1993) **2.10** Hogan's Heroes **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
2.00 The Goldbergs **3.30** Black-ish **4.00** Baby Daddy **4.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **11.00** Celebrity First Dates **12.05** Naked Attraction **1.10** Gogglebox **2.15** Bizarre ER **3.05** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD
Film4
1.00 Love Happens (2009) **3.10** The Hound of the Baskervilles (1959) **4.55** The Seeker: The Dark Is Rising (2007) **6.55** Ferris Bueller's Day Off (1986) **9.00** Cuckoo (2014) **11.15** Blood Ties (2013) **1.45** Weekend (2011) **3.50** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Conan the Barbarian, Channel 5, 11.05pm
An evil warlord kills a barbarian chieftain, whose son grows up to be a mighty warrior and seeks revenge for his father's death. He finds there is more at stake, as the tyrant is close to acquiring all the pieces of a magic mask, which will make him all-powerful. Fantasy adventure, with Jason Momoa. (2011)

TUESDAY
Strangers in Amish Country, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A military nurse returns from a tour of duty in Afghanistan to her family's farm in rural Ohio, and falls for an Amish neighbour after an intruder wreaks havoc. Romantic drama, starring Jes Macallan. (2017)

WEDNESDAY
Abducted: The Carina White Story, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A couple take their three-week-old baby to a hospital for treatment, but she is snatched by a woman desperate for a child. She raises the infant as her own for years, but as the girl grows up, she begins to suspect the truth and resolves to investigate her kidnapping and find her parents. Fact-based drama, starring Keke Palmer and Aunjanue Ellis. (2012)



Conan the Barbarian Conan the Barbarian, Monday, Channel 5, 11.05pm

THURSDAY
Bond of Silence, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman searches for answers after her husband is mysteriously murdered while trying to subdue a wild teenage house party on New Year's Eve. However, as she tries to find out the truth, she faces secrecy at every turn from the party-goers and their parents. Drama, starring Kim Raver, Greg Grunberg and Charlie McDermott. (2010)

FRIDAY
The Stepford Wives, BBC1, 11.50pm
A ruthless TV boss suffers a nervous breakdown and is persuaded to relocate to an idyllic town. However, she begins to suspect something is very wrong with the local women and sets out to discover the dark secret behind the seemingly perfect community. Frank Oz's comedy remake of the 1975 satire, with Nicole Kidman, Matthew Broderick, Bette Midler, Glenn Close and Christopher Walken. (2004)

The new teams hope they can rise to the challenge

Even in the year of Brexit, Donald Trump becoming US President and the deaths of a distressing number of much-loved celebrities, the announcement in September 2016 that The Great British Bake Off was leaving the BBC was frontpage news.

It was still making headlines this year too, as it was revealed that Sandi Toksvig and Noel Fielding will be taking over as presenters after Mel and Sue declined to make the jump to Channel 4, while former Great British Menu expert Prue Leith will be filling the judging role vacated by Mary Berry.

But amid all the speculation about how the new line-up will fare and when the next series is likely to hit our screens, you may have missed out on the news that another member of the Bake Off family has been undergoing a makeover of its own.

If you need your memory jogged, the first series of Bake Off: Crème de la Crème aired on BBC Two last year, and gave teams of

professional pastry chefs the chance to show what they could do.

Given that the amateurs on The Great British Bake Off have rustled up such spectacular creations as a bread lion, a cake Moulin Rouge and a gingerbread Colosseum, it was hoped that the experts would come up with some truly jaw-dropping showstoppers – and they definitely delivered.

However, the series still got something of a mixed response from viewers and the critics. While we perhaps should have expected Crème de la Crème to be more openly competitive than the jolly, pastel-coloured Bake Off tent – after all, these contestants were putting their professional reputations on the line – the fact that three different teams competed in each episode meant there wasn't much of a chance to get to know the individual bakers.

Add in the complicated scoring system – each of the three judges marked each round out of 30 – and it began to seem as if the series was lacking some of the heart and

humour that had made its sister show such a hit.

So, there have been a few tweaks to the recipe this time around, including a new presenter as Angus Deayton takes over from Michelin-starred chef Tom Kerridge, presumably to add a layman's perspective to what had been a very technical show.

The judging panel has been reduced from three to two, with Cherish Finden and Benoit Blin returning to their roles, and there's also been a change to the format. This time around, two groups of five teams will compete across three heats to give us a chance to get know them and pick someone to root for.

But the standard of baking hasn't been relaxed, as in the opening edition, the teams are asked to make 36 identical Moka au Café slices and 36 identical Napoleons, in just three hours before reinventing the Peach Melba as a fabulous showstopper.

And the team with the fewest points will be going home.



Bake Off: Crème de la Crème, Tuesday, BBC2, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Child of Our Time BBC1, 9pm
For most of us, the millennium probably doesn't feel as if it was that long ago, but the 25 children born in 2000 who are taking part in this series are now 16, which means they are free to live by themselves, get married, pay taxes and even have offspring of their own. Robert Winston and Tanya Byron catch up with the group in this two-part documentary. Among the highlights is Charlie's first taste of love, Eve's life-changing revelation, and Jamie discussing the shocking events that caused him to re-evaluate his priorities. There's also an insight into research involving human biology and neuroscience that helps to explain the most baffling aspects of this stage of life. Yes, there really is a reason for moody teenagers!

TUESDAY
The Richard Dimbleby Lecture 2017 BBC1, 10.45pm
John O Brennan spent almost four years as director of the CIA, and as chief counterterrorism adviser to Barack Obama. In light of shocking events in London on March 22, the threat of terrorism is more relevant than ever, so this year's Richard Dimbleby Lecture should prove all too topical. Here Brennan

discusses the future security and stability of the world, drawing on his experience of intelligence collection and analysis and covert operations to determine how societies will protect themselves in the face of turbulent global events.

WEDNESDAY
Me and My Dog: The Ultimate Contest BBC2, 8pm
New series. Chris Packham hosts the show where dog owners and their pets compete in physical and mental challenges designed to test their ability to communicate, with trainers and canine scientists on hand to help them develop the relationship between human and animal. In the first episode, half the contestants must lead their dogs through a series of gates using verbal and physical signals, while the others must collect tennis balls in fast-flowing water. The final challenge sees the owners and dogs compete in a tethered biking challenge, to decide who has triumphed in the first stage of the contest.

THURSDAY
Alone with the In-Laws BBC2, 8pm
Is modern marriage really that much

different from relationships of the past? And can modern couples learn something from their parents? Those are the questions tackled in this programme which places a soon-to-be-wed pair with their in-laws to see what they can learn from the people who raised them and their partner. We meet Chris and Stacey from Bristol who are getting married in the summer. While planning for their big day is one thing, the couple also obviously want to make a success making a success of the years that follow. To help out, Reverend Kate Bottley from Gogglebox arranges for them to spend a few days with their respective in-laws-to-be. What will the experiment tell each of them about their partner's expectation of married life? And will Chris and Stacey still feel the same about trying the knot?



The Graham Norton Show, Friday, BBC1, 10.35pm

FRIDAY
Unreported World Channel 4, 7.30pm
The statistics of the Syrian refugee crisis are hard to comprehend. More than three million people have now fled the country, with Lebanon alone taking in one and a half million. And that number is increasing daily. In this powerful documentary, Shaunagh Connair reports from the country where, despite offers of assistance from the international community, some of those most in need – refugee children with serious medical conditions – are dying while they wait for help. Several developed nations have promised to help the most vulnerable youngsters and resettle them. However, it seems there are limits on medical grounds as to who is being accepted, resulting in some of the sickest children and their families being behind.

The Graham Norton Show BBC1, 10.35pm
The Irishman returns with a brand new run of 13 shows. Here, Graham catches up with Michael Caine and Morgan Freeman, stars of new heist comedy Going in Style. Plus, comedian Jack Whitehall and Game of Thrones actress Gemma Whelan talk about their roles in BBC One's Evelyn Waugh adaptation, Decline and Fall.

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DATE	DAYS	
10/4	5	Paignton/Torquay (more dates)
14/4	4	Tenby (more dates)
17/4	5	Eastbourne (more dates)
17/4	5	Isle of Wight (more dates)
1/5	5	Weymouth (more dates)
1/5	5	Weston Super Mare (more dates)
15/5	5	Dover/Canterbury
22/5	5	Cornwall (Looe)(more dates)
22/5	6	Highland Railways
29/5	5	Ilfracombe
29/5	5	Snowdonia and Trains
5/6	5	Bournemouth (more dates)
5/6	5	Warners Thornaby Hall
8/6	5	Norfolk Broads
22/6	5	Sidmouth (more dates)

DATE	DAYS	
23/6	3	Leicester/Bosworth Battle
26/6	5	Babbacombe
3/7	5	Scarborough
9/7	6	Durham and Northumbria
19/7	5	Llandudno (more dates)
22/7	7	Tour of Celtic Countries
20/5	5	Great Yarmouth
23/7	7	Scotland Fort William
31/7	5	North Devon Bideford
31/7	5	Isle of Scilly
6/8	5	Peak District
21/8	5	Chester and Arley Hall
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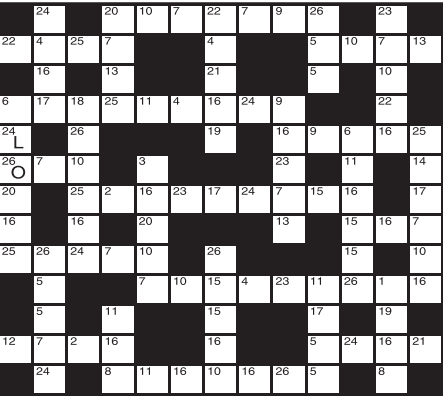
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No.423

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	O	Z	A	V	K	B	Y	F	R	S	U	W	L
14	Q	G	D	P	T	N	M	C	E	H	J	X	I

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

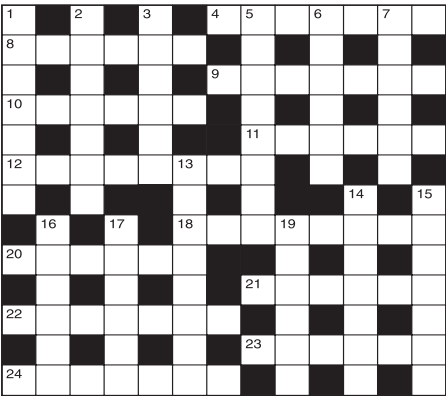
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Forward some money (7)
- Rose is involved in basketball (6)
- A misguided vicar gets direction in greed (7)
- More suitable as a workman? (6)
- It may be rude to make a digression (6)
- No result of snap decision (8)
- It may be taken to promote good feeling (8)
- Go over undulating track (6)
- Kind of pastel sheets (6)
- Somewhat overstressed in verbal construction (7)
- One eats it, as matter of course (6)
- Supports inferior goods (7)

Down

- Go in for modified coverage (7)
- Grape-producer includes a label to mark its year (7)
- Ranted perhaps when heated (6)
- Business interest (8)
- Put in charge at the lemonade factory? (6)
- Naturally, it raises awkward points (6)
- Put into liquidation (8)
- Get into bad shape (7)
- A complaint soon spotted? (7)
- A bang on the head? (6)
- Fuss about the French in Spain (6)
- Is left and right in the water (6)



Quick Clues:

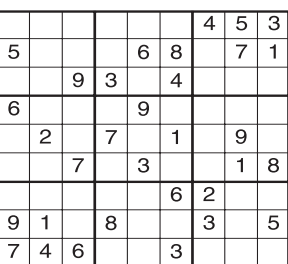
Across

- Quarrel (7)
- Symbol (6)
- Attack (7)
- Enemy (6)
- Tone of voice (6)
- Dedication (8)
- Voluntary (4-4)
- Discuss (6)
- Hidden (6)
- Spear (7)
- Individual (6)
- 100 years (7)

Down

- Treachery (7)
- Notice (7)
- Occupant (6)
- Example (8)
- Swagger (6)
- Gift (6)
- Lower (8)
- Malady (7)
- Palpable (7)
- 10 years (6)
- Obvious (6)
- Exultant (6)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	3	2	9	8	7	6	4	5
9	4	6	1	5	3	8	2	7
7	5	8	2	6	4	3	9	1
3	6	1	7	4	5	2	8	9
2	8	4	6	9	1	5	7	3
5	7	9	3	2	8	1	6	4
8	9	3	4	1	2	7	5	6
4	2	7	5	3	6	9	1	8
6	1	5	8	7	9	4	3	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
 CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Screwdriver; 9 Nip; 10 Estimator; 11 Orbit; 13 Runways; 14 Parish; 16 Ledger; 18 Special; 19 Tests; 20 Endurance; 21 Tie; 22 Proposition. Down: 2 Cup; 3 Event; 4 Dotard; 5 Immense; 6 Estranges; 7 Encompassed; 8 Pre-stressed; 12 Bartender; 15 Stirrup; 17 Planes; 19 Treat; 21 Too.
 QUICK - Across: 1 Forgiveness; 9 Inn; 10 Animation; 11 Ashen; 13 Execute; 14 Pariah; 16 Strafe; 18 Orifice; 19 Spend; 20 Aggravate; 21 Din; 22 True-hearted. Down: 2 Own; 3 Grain; 4 Voiced; 5 Nearest; 6 Stimulate; 7 Disapproval; 8 Independent; 12 Harbinger; 15 Agitate; 17 Deface; 19 Sheer; 21 Due.

Quiz

- Which South African PM was assassinated in 1966?
- In which sport was Britain's Carl Furrer world champion in 1982?
- What is the capital of Nevada?
- What type of animal is a brocket?
- Who was the Beatles' producer?
- In which field did Wole Soyinka win the 1986 Nobel Prize?
- Of which county was Parts of Lindsey a division?
- Which inventor's middle name was Alva?
- What was Colin McRae the first Briton to win for 18 years?
- Which political figure wrote the play Largo Desolato in 1985?

Last week's solutions:

- Quiz: 1 Croydon; 2 Charlotte Corday; 3 Dodo;
 4 Oboe; 5 Bratislava; 6 Anno Domini; 7 Putney;
 8 A Central American bird; 9 Gulf of Alaska;
 10 Terpsichore.
 Niner: RUMINATES

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

47218
68518
51936

gives a French river,
 gives a second French river,
 gives a Pakistani river.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Big Bilashings of amazing curry

RESTAURANTS like The Bilash can give a reviewer a bad name. The nature of the beast is to try to find fault; perhaps the lamb isn't quite tender enough or the dish is too spicy or too salty.

Maybe the decor is a bit tired or, alternatively, too overblown. Alternatively, the service may not be good enough, or it might be way too clingy and attentive.

And then you get the rare occasions where you find yourself enjoying a meal that is as near perfect as it is possible to get. It can't be easy for Sitab Khan, who has been the chief proprietor at The Bilash, in Cheapside, Wolverhampton, for more than three decades. With his son, Mohammed, he has built a reputation for his restaurant as one of the best in the region.

REPUTATION

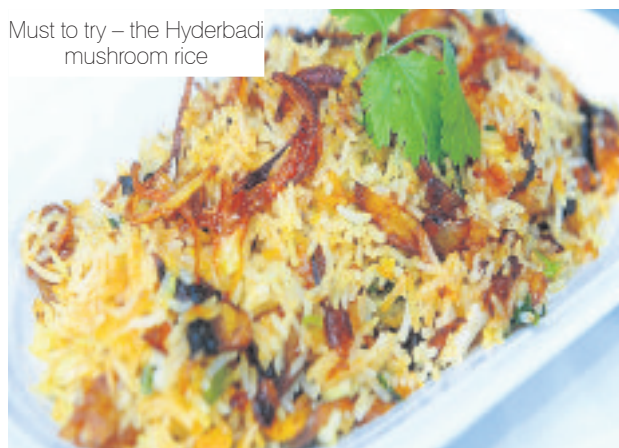
It's not just a good Indian restaurant, it's a good restaurant full stop. And it charges the sort of prices you expect to pay in a top restaurant. That, in turn, means the pressure never lets up; The Bilash faces a constant battle to justify its reputation and maintain the high standards every customer will expect.

You can see the pressure in the kitchen when evening service hits a peak. The large window between the dining area and the kitchen gives a spectator's view of a team working at full speed. There aren't many smiles but there is a lot of focus on display. The contrast with the relaxed, newly-decorated dining area couldn't be more stark. Cream leather and delicate filigree Indian lampshades all add to a sense of light and space.

The £100,000 revamp has also included a series of booths that were clearly popular on the night we visited.

The table was barely cleared of poppadums when our starters started arriving. Tiger prawn in red pepper sauce, sitting on a puri – a small fried bread. Pretty as

Must to try – the Hyderabadi mushroom rice



a picture and just as nice to eat. Jalpari kebabs are saffron flavoured fish rolls, stuffed with prawns. The spicing is light, with a crisp shell around the rice and prawn stuffing. My choice was tandoori pomfret – a marinated, herbed and spiced fillet of traditional Indian fish served up with a neat little carrot salad and a smear of tamarind sauce. It was delicate, flavourful and delicious.

After a few minutes of arguing over whose starter tasted best, the main courses started arriving.

Mine was a Mangshor Jhool, a Bengali lamb curry.

Sleek and chic – inside is classy and contemporary



The meat was tender and the gravy, while full of flavour, didn't detract from its taste.

My other half had gone for something milder: Murgh Begum Bahar, a chicken dish with a rich pale sauce of yoghurt, curd and almonds. Our daughter had chosen Maacher Jhool, a Bengali fish curry. She couldn't shut up about it. I took a taste and it was hard to argue with her enthusiasm. Side dishes were made up of a couple of naan breads – one peshwari and one garlic – and a basmati rice made with onions, ginger, salt and steamed mushroom. I'd happily eat that on its own as a meal.

There were three desserts on offer, so we had one each: a neat little chocolate sponge with a molten middle, a white chocolate affair like an Eton Mess and a traditional gulab jamun, sweet spongy balls made with evaporated milk and soaked in rose scented syrup. With a good strong cup of coffee to finish.

With a bottle of wine, two people aren't going to leave with a bill much under £80 but there's a good reason why, after more than three decades, The Bilash maintains its reputation.

SIMON PENFOLD

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Detached family home in private off-road position

A home in a convenient position, yet with a rural feel, this three-bedroom detached family home in High Haden Road, Cradley Heath, is superbly presented throughout.

It is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £250,000.

In a most unusual, private, off-road position with a superb aspect over the surrounding area, its

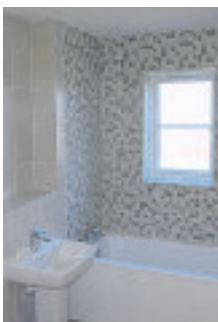
CRADLEY HEATH
£250,000

accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hall, cloakroom/WC, a large lounge, impressive conservatory, superbly proportioned farmhouse-style kitchen with a range cooker, three good-sized bedrooms and a well-proportioned bathroom.

The property has gas central heating, double glazing and good-sized grounds.

In more detail, the entrance hall has ceramic tiled flooring as does the cloakroom/WC. The lounge has patio doors to the conservatory, which again has ceramic tiled flooring.

Call 0121 585 6667 or visit www.hickshadley.com



One of only two new bungalows in project still to be purchased

SEDGLEY
£279,000

One of only two bungalows now remaining – with the show home available to view by appointment – Number 5 is the Hagley model off Dudley Road, Sedgley.

It is for sale through Taylors at £279,000. With construction now complete, this home has an imposing reception hall, a transverse living room/kitchen with an extensive range of fitted units and many integrated appliances, utility room with a door to the substantial garage, a fitted cloakroom/WC, two double bedrooms and a stylish bathroom with a white suite.

It also has a garage and turfed gardens.

Contact Taylors on 01902 880888 or visit www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk

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HALEN HILL, CRADLEY HEATH, The Woodlands £1,295 pcm+Fees
An exceptional family home! Here is an opportunity to acquire a most impressive detached home with 4 double bedrooms and pleasantly situated in this very quiet cul-de-sac close to Haden Hill Park and Halesowen Town Centre. The property offers excellent family accommodation of generous proportions throughout. Featuring 2 reception rooms, beautiful fitted kitchen with appliances, utility room, WC, family bathroom with shower, en-suite to master bedroom, driveway and



HALESOWEN, Mendip Road £695 pcm+Fees
UNDERGOING A RE-DECORATION A spacious 3 bedroom semi detached home on the Squirrels Estate in Halesowen/Hayley Green, being double glazed and centrally heated throughout. Being located on this popular estate the property would make an ideal family home and has accommodation to comprise a reception hall, lounge, dining kitchen, 3 bedrooms, parking and garage. MINIMUM CONTRACT 12 MONTHS. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Sanderson Place £850 pcm+Fees
THE LARGEST APARTMENT IN THE BLOCK A luxury living in Hayley Green is this superb luxury first floor apartment offering spacious accommodation including open plan lounge/kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, master with en-suite, a further well appointed bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing and allocated parking. EPC: B



KINGSWINFORD, Camberley Road £650 pcm+Fees
A very well presented semi detached property located on the popular High Acres Estate and offering extremely easy access to schools, shops and local amenities. Large lounge, fitted kitchen with appliances, lovely rear garden with decking area, 3 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, garage & driveway. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Short Street £650 pcm+Fees
Not to be missed! A lovely and terrace in a very popular location close to Town Centre, having been completely refurbished to a very high standard. Featuring: 2 reception rooms, stunning large kitchen with oven/hob and dishwasher, 2 double bedrooms, refitted bathroom with separate shower, central heating & double glazing, small private rear garden, on road parking. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Brett Young Close £825 pcm+Fees
An impressive 2nd floor apartment within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre. This modern apartment features 2 double bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite shower room, spacious open plan lounge/kitchen, bathroom with shower, allocating parking. Also benefits from gas central heating and double glazing. MINIMUM CONTRACT 12 MONTHS. EPC: B



CRADLEY HEATH, Mill Road £595 pcm+Fees
Located on this very popular Timber Tree Estate and ideally situated for local schools and transport links is this lovely 2 double bedroom house featuring reception room, fitted kitchen with utility, bathroom with shower, private rear garden. Off road parking. EPC: D



ROWLEY REGIS, Winwood Road £575 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished semi detached family home in a popular location, close to the M5 J2 and Blackheath Town Centre. Featuring 3 bedrooms, double glazing, gas central heating, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, house bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens and driveway parking for 2/3 cars. EPC: C



ROWLEY REGIS, Mincing Lane £575 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished traditional 3 bedroom semi detached house in a popular location, which is ideal for local shops, bus links and the M5 J2. This family home features entrance hall, lounge, dining room, fitted kitchen, upstairs bathroom, front & rear gardens, gas central heating, double glazing and on road parking. EPC: G



WORDSLEY, John Street £575 pcm+Fees
A stunning 3 bedroom terrace property featuring a new upstairs bathroom and a new kitchen with patio doors leading into the garden. Two reception rooms and new windows and carpets throughout complete the property. This is a superb family home which offers a long term rental. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Foxhollies Drive £575 pcm+Fees
A modern semi detached property in cul de sac location. A short distance from Halesowen and the number 9 bus route. Featuring 3 bedrooms, double glazing, gas central heating, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, house bathroom with shower, garage, driveway for 2 cars, front and rear gardens. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, COLLEY GATE, Ladysmith Road £550 pcm+Fees
A beautiful mid terrace house in a sought after area for Colley Lane Primary School, local shops and bus links to Halesowen, Stourbridge and Birmingham. This house features 2 reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, 2 good size bedrooms, family bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, rear garden. A property not to be missed! EPC: E



CRADLEY HEATH, Clifton Street £550 pcm+Fees
Within walking distance to Old Hill shops and local train station. A well presented unfurnished modern mid terrace house benefits from gas central heating, lovely living room, fitted dining kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, rear garden, 2 allocated parking spaces. EPC: G



ROWLEY REGIS, Truro Close £525 pcm+Fees
Ideal for access to the M5 J2, Rowley Regis Train Station and local Shops. This lovely unfurnished or part furnished semi detached back to back house featuring living room, fitted kitchen with appliances, 2 bedrooms, gas central heating, front & side gardens, allocated parking space. EPC: TBC



DUDLEY, Attingham Drive £495 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished 2nd floor apartment close to Dudley Town Centre. Featuring an open plan lounge/dining kitchen with fridge freezer and washing machine, 2 bedrooms, bathroom with a shower, electric storage heating, double glazing, alarm, allocated parking. EPC: G



HALESOWEN, Cavalier Drive £495 pcm+Fees
PART FURNISHED An immaculately presented ground floor apartment, within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre, and very popular for first time renters. Featuring a spacious lounge with sofas and with patio doors leading to patio area, fitted kitchen, large double bedroom with wardrobes, chest of drawers, bed frame and mattress, bathroom with shower, double glazing, electric heating, allocated parking. EPC: C



TIPTON, Ferguson Drive £495 pcm+Fees
HAD A FULL RE-DECORATION A lovely modern 1st floor apartment available now, which is ideally located for Dudley and Wednesbury. This great apartment features 2 bedrooms, spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, electric storage heating, double glazing, 2 allocated parking spaces, communal gardens. Internal viewing recommended. EPC: C



ROWLEY REGIS, Powke Lane £450 pcm+Fees
Deceptively large and well worth a viewing. This 1st floor apartment features a good size double bedroom, spacious lounge, large kitchen, huge bathroom with a separate shower cubical, parking to the side of the property and also within walking distance to Blackheath Town Centre. EPC: F



CRADLEY HEATH, King Street £435 pcm+Fees
A wonderfully unfurnished ground floor, within walking distance to Old Hill shops and train station. This property comprises of a light and airy living room, fitted kitchen with a washing machine, 1 double bedroom and shower room. Benefits include electric storage heating, communal gardens, allocated parking. EPC: TBC



BRIERLEY HILL, The Breeze £450 pcm+Fees
A delightful modern 1 bedroom 1st floor flat in this convenient position within easy distance of local schools, shops, road and public transport links. Open plan lounge/fitted kitchen with appliances, double bedroom, bathroom with shower, Allocated parking for 1 car. EPC: B



LYE/STOURBRIDGE, High Street £375 pcm+Fees
In the Centre of Lye which is ideal for buses, shops and Lye Train Station. This spacious 2nd floor apartment features a lovely lounge, 1 double bedroom, bathroom, modern and contemporary kitchen/diner, electric heating, double glazing, on road parking. EPC: E



Well-presented family home on corner plot

CRADLEY HEATH
£250,000

This well-presented modern detached home in Dorothy Adams Close, Cradley Heath, lies on a large corner plot in a cul-de-sac.

It is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £250,000 with no chain. It has a spacious lounge/dining room, a dining kitchen, a utility, a downstairs cloakroom/WC, four good-sized bedrooms, an en suite, family bathroom, a double garage, off-road parking for several cars, a rear garden, gas central heating and double glazing.

In more detail, the living room has a bay window, a feature fireplace, laminate flooring and an archway to the dining area with French doors to the garden. The dining kitchen includes an integrated electric cooker with gas hob and French doors to the garden, laminate flooring and room for further appliances.

Call 0121 585 6667.



Traditional style detached house is well proportioned

GORNAL WOOD
£179,950

<<<

An individually designed three-bedroomed traditional detached house, 81 New Street, Gornal Wood, Dudley, is well proportioned and has scope for further enhancement and upgrading.

It is for sale through Wakeman at £179,950 with no chain.

It has a storm porch, entrance hall, cloakroom/WC, two living rooms, a breakfast kitchen, sitting room, three bedrooms, a bathroom, gardens and a concrete store room.

This property is positioned on a wide corner plot close to Gornal Wood Village centre, where a wide range of amenities are available. The property has been extended and enlarged.

Outside, is a lawned front and side garden with shrub borders. A driveway leads to ample off-street parking.

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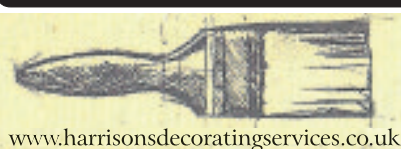
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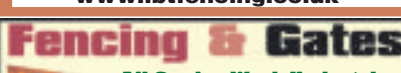
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Hot Clio's impressive mid-life makeover

By John Griffiths

Renault has given its best-selling Clio a mid-life makeover, and naturally that applies to the hottest Clio of them all, the Renaultsport RS 220 Trophy.

The changes include some styling tweaks to the exterior, and a higher quality feel inside – with of course some of the latest technology added to the mix.

There's also a new, top specification model, the Signature Nav which comes with features such as hands-free parking, a top of the range R-Link communications and connectivity syst, leather upholstery, 360-degree parking sensors and a rear parking camera.

While most Clio sales will continue to consist of those powered by smaller petrol and diesel engines, the RS220 has carved itself a deserve niche in the hot hatch world alongside the likes of the Golf GTi and the Ford ST.

At £22,425 the Trophy, the sporting flagship of the range, is competitively priced and comes with the most powerful Clio engine, a 1.6 litre turbo turning out 220bhp and a hefty 260Nm of torque. It, too, shares the upgrades which benefit the rest of the range but it's also very different, having been through the hands of the Renaultsport engineers, who have huge experience in all forms of four wheel racing as well as encouraging the young drivers of tomorrow.

The Trophy is one of two Renaultsport models – the other is the 200bhp RS200 which costs £19,725. As well as more power, the Trophy also gets bigger (18-inch) alloys and lowered sports suspension.

The test car was also fitted with a throaty Akrapovic exhaust (a hefty £900 extra) but it



The Trophy has a higher quality feel inside

certainly adds a low, growling soundtrack to please the enthusiast.

Both models come with a dual clutch automatic transmission, which may be a matter of regret to some hot hatch fans who prefer a manual option. But in truth the EDC system, as Renault calls it, is probably faster than most mortals can manage and there are up/down shift paddles behind the steering wheel for human intervention.

It's changes are also subject to driver choice via the normal, sport and race drive mode systems, which also allows you to dial in appropriate variations to the power steering, stability system and engine. In race mode, for example, gear changes take 150 milliseconds – 25 per cent less than in "normal" mode which is designed for smoother progress on the road.

Using the drive modes can significantly change the car's character, from a quick but comfortable Dr Jekyll on the road

to something of a Mr Hyde on the track. Switching to race mode actually turns off both traction and stability systems – probably not something you want to do on the road and especially not during my test route on wet and muddy Gloucestershire roads.

Race mode also gives you the option of an F1 style "launch control" system for a fast start off the line.

The Trophy tackles the 0 to 62mph sprint in a rapid 6.7 seconds, yet driven with more restraint it is capable of averaging almost 48mpg (the same figure as the lower powered RS200) with a CO₂ rating of 135g/km. This combination of figures are impressive when judged against its rivals.

Apart from the RS badges, the Trophy is visually distinguished by its larger (18-inch) alloys, lowered suspension, F1-style blade at the front and a spoiler and diffuser at the rear, along with twin rectangular tailpipes, and red brake calipers.

In spite of its sports suspension, the Trophy rides remarkably well in "normal" mode. It's firm but doesn't crash or thump over poor surfaces giving you a sporty feel but not an uncomfortable one.

It turns in quickly and accurately, offering a confidence-inspiring stability on twisting roads. The car's special RS differential is designed to handle the power, aiding smooth, quick starts and cornering adhesion in a system which is, of course, backed up by electronic stability and traction programs.

The Trophy is shod with 205/40 low profile tyres and the disc brakes are progressive and powerful.

The interior has a premium feel, with Renaultsport-specific upholstery and sporting themed trim, including full sports front seats,



Using the drive modes mean you can significantly transform the car's character

aluminium pedals, plus climate control, and a central colour touchscreen controlling the R-Link system including audio, Bluetooth, and navigation systems. Also standard are electric windows and mirrors, automatic wipers, cruise control, speed limiter, extra tinted rear windows, and a leather-clad steering wheel.

The Trophy comes with a 28E insurance rating and a benefit in kind tax liability of 24 per cent.

Even in these days of rising fuel prices and a seemingly inexhaustable public appetite

for SUV-styled vehicles, there has long been a demand for hot hatchbacks and probably always will be.

Renault has engineered the Trophy, and the RS200, to meet the demand in a modern setting. The use of the 1.6 turbo engine offers a blend of performance with surprising economy, and the use of the RS button to change throttle, gear and steering (among other things) means you can instantly change the car's character to suit your mood and conditions.



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**VAUXHALL**

By John Griffiths

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The club house at Penn Golf Club. The course is attracting lots of new members



Frosty weather does not deter golfers – and lots of special tournaments are planned



Penn Golf Club's new professional Andy Ellis, left, and director of Union Golf Stuart Bottrill



Keeping greens in tip-top condition – course manager Tim Johnson

Investment drive now paying off

PENN Golf Club are aiming to leave their rivals green with envy as they tee up for a bright future. The ambitious club have enjoyed a productive winter that has seen them appoint a new club professional.

They have also invested in a new fleet of Toro course machinery to help maintain the top class course that sweeps across Penn Common.

Andy Ellis has taken on the role of club professional. He is a regular county player at all age levels and former Staffordshire Matchplay champion, and competed in the British Amateur Championships at Royal Lytham St Annes before turning professional at the age of 23.

And in a further boost to the club, Ellis will be supported by Midlands PGA Golf Professional and director of Union Golf, Stuart Bottrill, who will oversee the provision of the golf shop services. And with Penn continuing to buck the national trend by attracting new members and securing a number of high-profile amateur events this summer, there is a real feelgood factor about the place.

Quality

"There are so many new initiatives going on at present, it's a really exciting time for the club," said secretary Mick Woodhouse. "We are moving forward on several fronts."

"We are delighted that Andy has joined us. He is a local lad and a former club champion at both Oxley and South Staffs, has played regular county golf at all age groups and played in the amateur open at Royal Lytham."

"With a newly-refurbished golf shop, including a top-of-the-range Swing Studio, Andy will provide an exciting programme of coaching and custom fitting to ensure members and visitors alike are improving their game at whatever age and level they are at. We have also continued to support our course manager Tim Johnson with the various investments we have made."

"The course is getting better all the time and we are introducing two new practice areas which will facilitate a teaching and golf development programme for schools, juniors, ladies, gents and families."

The quality of the course has been emphasised yet again with the club due to stage the Staffordshire county trials this month, a Staffordshire Ladies clash with Worcestershire in April, a qualifying round for the Staffs' Union of Golf Clubs Club Golfer Champion in June and a Staffordshire Ladies Bronze Alliance meeting in July.

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Nick Elwell

"There are so many new initiatives going on at present, it's a really exciting time for the club"

In addition, American Golf have made a double booking with their seniors event, which proved a hit last year, supplemented by a nine-hole competition.

"American Golf held one of their senior qualifying tournaments here last year and they are coming back again this summer and we are also staging one of their nine-hole tournaments," added Woodhouse. "Both of those are nationwide events while we have also got the county involved again."

"It's testament to the quality of the course that we are asked to stage events such as these."

But arguably the biggest boost for the club's hard-working 14-strong board of directors is the continued rise in membership.

"We have 480 members and we are hoping to push that to 500 this year," said Woodhouse. "We interviewed 48 new members last year and more interviews are currently taking place. That is most encouraging because a lot of clubs are struggling to attract new members."

"There is a lot of competition for new members around here because there are a lot of quality of courses in the area. So it is encouraging to see people coming to Penn."

"We have a new range of attractive membership packages across all categories with flexible payment plans and no joining fees."

"Our one-month trial membership has proved popular, allowing prospective members to experience the course and the club facilities."

And prospective new members can take advantage of a family fun day and open afternoon on April 14 when they can play the course for free of charge from 2pm.

Anyone wishing to play on the day should call 01902 341142 to reserve a tee time.

Eddie ready to tackle club business lunch

STOURBRIDGE Rugby Club has scored a massive coup by booking England Rugby head coach Eddie Jones as the headline speaker at an £100-a-head lunch.

The Australian is the toast of rugby having just guided England to the Six Nations championship after previously leading them to their record 18th successive victory.

He will be joined by former Stourbridge head coach and Australian international Glen Ella, British and Irish Lions international John Bentley, TV antiques expert Philip Serrell and Lord Digby Jones – former director-general of the Confederation of British Industry at the business lunch.

Stourbridge Rugby chairman Robin Edwards said the excitement is building ahead of the May 5 event, which will see more than 1,100 guests. Tickets are still available and cost £95, plus VAT. But demand has been strong and tickets are being snapped up fast.

Jones is set to meet junior coaches and players from the club. Chairman Robin Edwards hopes Jones can inspire their younger players. Jones will hold morning training sessions prior to the club's corporate lunch event.

Scholars mourn loss of club stalwart, 79

CHASETOWN FC are mourning the loss of another club stalwart.

Club president Brian Baker, aged 79, was a former player and was instrumental in the forming of Chase Terrace Old Scholars back in 1954.

He was affectionately known as 'Blondie' in his playing days and Baker filled a number of roles in his 63 years with the club.

His death comes just a month after the passing away of long-serving Chasetown physio Mick Andrews.

Tributes have been paid to Baker. Boss Dave Stringer said: "It's been a very difficult start to 2017. Following the death of Mick, Brian is another huge loss."

"He was president of the club, part owner and was Chasetown through and through."

"He was a lovely man who did everything he could for the club and will be sorely missed," Stringer added.

Chasetown chairman and lifelong friend of Mr Baker, Mike Joiner said: "Brian will be sadly missed by all associated with the club."

"For the past 63 years Brian has worked tirelessly for the club and for the past 33 years would be seen at the Scholars Ground day in day out."

Casino chips in with support for 'Bomber'

'BAGGIES Bomber' Tommy Langford lines up for the world WBO middleweight title – and has the support of Birmingham's Broadway Casino.

Langford steps into the ring on April 22 at Leicester Arena to face Georgian Avtandil Khurtsidze.

Just three years after turning professional in September 2012, Langford won his first regional championship, the WBO middleweight title. By 2016 he had claimed the British strap and reclaimed his Commonwealth title. He has an undefeated professional record and now has his sights set on middleweight superstar Gennady Golovkin. Langford, 27, born in Bideford, Devon to Midlands family, is now based in Birmingham and has a season ticket in the Birmingham Road End.

He has been sponsored for the fight by Broadway Casino.

Managing director Denis Dowling said: "We showcase the best of boxing in our lively Manhattan Bar. We are sure the added excitement of our sponsorship of Tommy will see even more avid fans flock to the casino. We are honoured to be able to associate our brand with Tommy, and are thoroughly looking forward to watching him in the ring."

Sport

Golf club investment drive is paying off

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Skipper can't wait to build on success

HALESOWEN Cricket Club is hoping hard winter work pays off when the pre-season games start.

It's been a hectic time at Seth Somers Park, both on and off the field, and Droitwich visit in a friendly on Saturday, April 15, with Astwood Bank 24-hours later.

Richard Brooker remains first team skipper for the club and he's hoping for some good weather.

He said: "We need the weather with us and a decent start in the pre-season games.

"I am a big believer in continuity and we made good headway last year with the Canterbury Cup and finishing fourth in the league, so we need to build on that this season.

"Nothing was ever achieved chopping and changing, we just need to grow a bit this year and be more savvy at key times. Who knows what could be achieved? The winter has been interesting and we just need to get on grass now."

Halesowen have retained prolific run scorer Ed Kilbee and wicket taker Eddie Rhodes, as well as overseas player Dylan Ross-Watt.

Wes Griffiths will be in charge of the T20 side as they look to retain the Worcestershire Cricket Board Canterbury Cup.

Work on the ground has been extensive in recent weeks and they have gained approval for a major revamp of the practice facilities with state-of-the-art playing surfaces and extended areas for bowlers.

Shropshire lads are too powerful for injury-hit Hales

Old Halesonians 13 Bridgnorth 31
HALES first team suffered another setback in their bid to stay safe in National League 3 Midlands having made more last minute changes to the line-up in this mid-table clash.

Rich Taylor and Jamie Keen are both out through injury, wing Luke Smith was unavailable and scrum-half Ben Tibbetts was not eligible. Ian Briggs stepped in at scrum half.

After 10 minutes Hales were penalised with Bridgnorth converting for an early lead. The Shropshire side followed up with two penalties taking the visitors to 0-14. Hales managed to pull back two penalties, converted by Briggs, before going in at half-time with a 6-14 score.

After the interval the home side fought back with dogged driving runs from Ben Barkley, Carl Robinson, Loz Breese and Neil Mason. A penalty try for a collapsing scrum was converted by Briggs 13-4. Hales lost Briggs to a yellow card with injured Breese replaced by Kieron Haynes. Pressure on Hales saw a converted try to Bridgnorth 13-9. Again Hales were depleted with a red card for Breese, who had returned. The visitors scored a further two tries, one converted, for victory.

Hales face an uphill battle to stay safe with a visit to League leaders Broad Street on Saturday, 3pm.

Ayres is ready to rock for Heathens



Danny Ayres is Cradley no1

DANNY Ayres starts the season as Cradley's new number one.

Ayres, widely regarded as one of the top showmen in the sport, has made the winter switch from Kent after impressing club bosses last season.

Boss Will Pottinger has revealed how he had a straight choice for top spot in the team between Ayres and returning skipper Tom Perry.

"I had the unusual choice of selecting either Danny or Tom as our number one rider as they've both got the exact

same average of 8.56," he said. "After discussing this situation with Tom and Danny, I decided that Danny would start at number one.

"There are a number of factors behind this decision. Danny hasn't held anything back in the practice sessions that we've had and I'm convinced that he can hit the ground running in heat one. Also, Tom has made the number five race jacket his own while away with Birmingham so it seemed a logical decision."

Heathens head to Birmingham next Wednesday for their re-arranged West Midlands Challenge with the Brummies.

They then make a welcome return to Monmore Green on Easter Monday, April 17, against Mildenhall.

Club co-promoter Gary Patchett said: "It's an amazing achievement to have this club going into an eighth season without a track of our own, so we must thank Chris Van Straaten and the staff at Wolverhampton."

Glassboys face injury problems

Stourbridge 1 Grantham 2

RECENT years at the War Memorial Ground have seen a succession of play-off disappointments, together with last year's agonising finish when two defeats in the final 48 hours of the season saw them miss out.

Saturday's 2-1 home defeat to Grantham hinted the end to the current campaign may be just as nervy for Gary Hackett's men as they look to close out a place in the Evo-Stik Northern Premier Division top five.

Goals early in each half from Luke and Lee Shaw earned the visiting Gingerbreads a victory which breathed new life into their own play-off charge.

Stourbridge's response was impressive and they pulled level on 15 minutes when Luke Benbow fooled visiting keeper Kieran Preston with a 25-yard free-kick.

Stour need to tread carefully over the remaining six games, four away from Amblescote.

Boss Gary Hackett is far too experienced to get distracted by the finer mathematical detail of the race. He is also well aware his team are more than capable of returning from the Peak District with a victory.

Hackett's mood on Saturday evening was soured by both the below-par performance and an injury list which continues to lengthen.

Only a quick glance at the starting XI is required to get an idea of the scale of change since the Glassboys bowed out of the FA Cup in such heroic fashion at Wycombe in early January.

While the likes of Dan Scarr and Kristian Green were tempted away by offers higher up the pyramid, much of the upheaval has been necessitated by injuries with Hackett seeing a number of key players sidelined.

On Saturday Matt Dodd was forced off inside the opening 15 minutes following a recurrence of a calf problem.

Centre-back Liam Slade, signed only a week ago from Halesowen Town to ease a defensive shortage, was then withdrawn in the second half after jarring his knee.

Triathlete gets off to a great Ed start

NEW Black Country Triathlete Ed Parry completed his first triathlon last weekend at the Dyfi Dash Sprint Tri in Machynlleth.

Parry did the 400m swim in 8:39, 20km bike in 43:46 and the 5k run in 35:13 finishing in 1:31:07, 25th in his age group, an excellent result for his first race.

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MARINE SINK YELTZ AT HOME

Halesowen Town 0 Marine 1
HAPLESS Halesowen did little to ease their relegation worries after a disappointing home defeat against lowly Marine on Tuesday.

The first-half proved to be a non-event with only Luke Wall creating any real danger with a couple of dangerous crosses for the visitors. By contrast, Halesowen failed to trouble the visiting defence at all.

The first meaningful effort for the Yeltz finally came with a low 53rd minute shot from Nathan Walker from the edge of the area after the ball was cleared off the head of striker Mo Diop.

Marine then snatched all three points when Alfons Fosu-Mensah lashed home a wide-angled shot off the far post in the 54th minute.

A 56th minute shot from Diop was blocked, before Marine captain Danny Mitchley had a penalty shout denied after an hour.

Home goalkeeper Dan Platt gathered a looping shot from Jamie Menagh.

Yeltz substitute Adam Skeldon connected with a 71st minute cross from James Bennett-Tindall, but his shot was saved at the foot of the post by visiting goalkeeper Paul Phillips in Halesowen's best attempt in a four performance.

Halesowen 'keeper Platt saved another wide-angled shot from Fosu-Mensah after 79 minutes and the delighted Merseysiders easily saw out the game to ease their own relegation fears.

Spennymoor 1 Halesowen 1

Halesowen got a creditable draw away from home and earned their fourth point in two games.

The Yeltz included new signing from Burton Albion, Cameron Steele, and he made an immediate impact on 26 minutes when he scored from the edge of the box.

Spennymoor had the ball in the net six minutes later but Graeme Armstrong was adjudged to have handled the ball.

Diop could have made it two just before the break but saw his shot saved by goalkeeper Daniel Lowson. The home side equalised on 72 minutes when substitute Robert Ramshaw scored.

Mayor backs charity clash



All those involved in last year's inaugural game, which raised £15,000 for the hospice

THE Mayor of Dudley has confirmed that he will be attending Sunday's charity football match between the legends of Stourbridge FC and West Bromwich Albion.

Last year's inaugural clash, in aid of Mary Stevens Hospice raised more than £15,000, with the likes of 'Super' Bob Taylor, Darren 'Big Dave' Moore and Paul Peschisolido appearing for the Baggies team.

This year the line-up will also feature Geoff Horsfield, Bobby Gould and Nigel Quashie.

Mayor Mohammed Hanif has confirmed that he will be attending the game at the War Memorial Ground, Amblescote, and will welcome the crowds as the gates open.

The Mayor will also be starting the mascot race that will see the likes of The Baggie Birds, Wolves' Wolfe and Toys 'R' Us' Geoffrey the Giraffe, take on an oversized obstacle course as they compete for mascot glory.

Amanda Bowen, deputy head of fundrais-

ing and lottery for the Mary Stevens Hospice group said: "We're absolutely delighted that the Mayor has lent his support to the day by agreeing to play such a big part.

"We're incredibly excited for the day, and would just like to extend our thanks to the Mayor for coming along to help."

The charity match sees the teams compete for the Jane Webb Memorial Trophy, named in tribute to a Stourbridge woman who sadly passed away in 2015. She was a supporter of the charity and the event was set-up to benefit the Hagley Road Hospice, by her son Matt, who will captain the Glassboys side.

He said: "It's just a wonderful feeling to see it generate so much support from so many different areas of the community."

Gates will open at 1pm and the game kicks off an hour later.

Tickets are £5 for aged 16 plus, and free for the under-16s.

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